

A SHORT
VIEW
OF THE
Immorality and Profaneness
OF THE
English Stage :
Together with
The Sense of Antiquity
Upon this
ARGUMENT.

By JEREMY COLLIER, M. A.

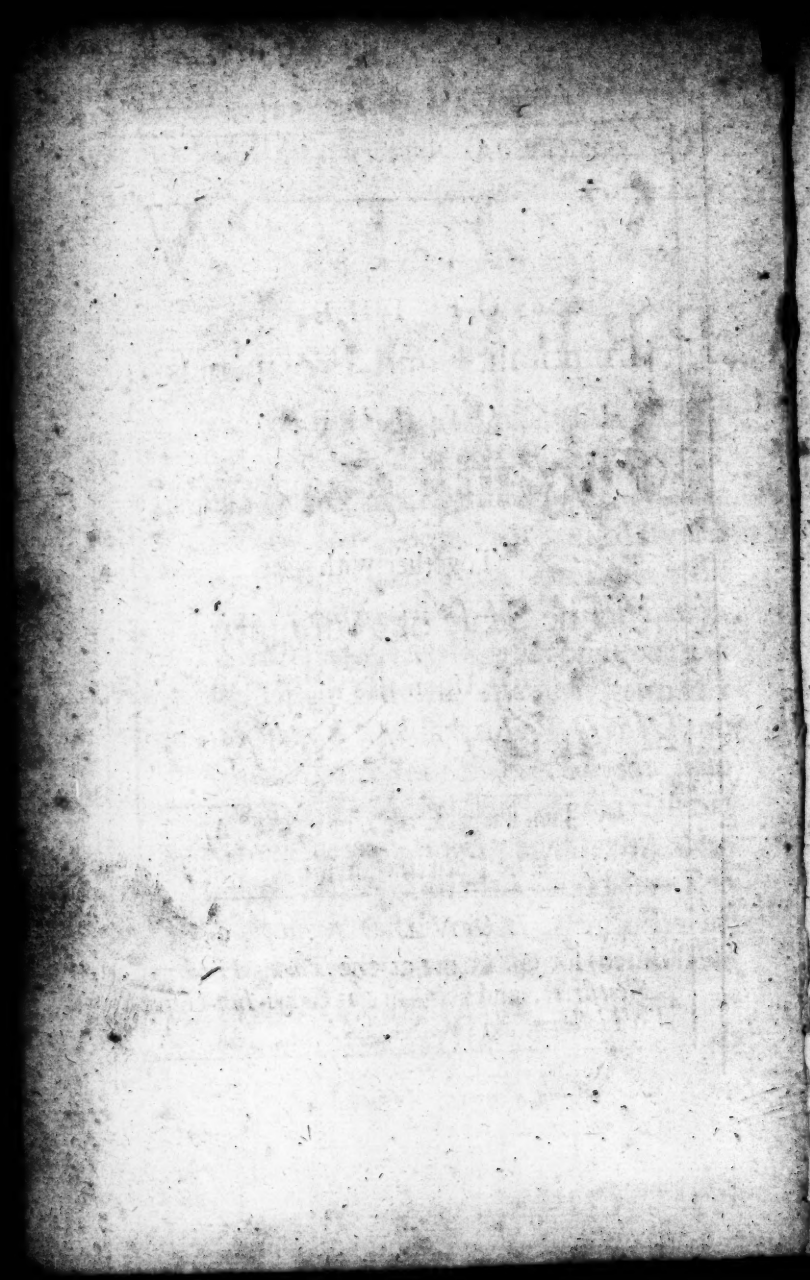
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THE
PREFACE.

Being convinc'd that nothing has gone farther in Debauching the Age than the Stage-Poets, and Play-House; I thought I could not employ my Time better than in Writing against them. These Men sure, take Virtue and Regularity, for Great Enemies, why else is their Disaffection so very Remarkable? It must be said, they have made their Attack with great Courage, and gain'd no inconsiderable Advantage. But it seems, Lewdness without Atheism, is but half their Business. Conscience might possibly recover, and Revenge be thought on; and therefore like Foot-Pads, they

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The Preface.

must not only Rob, but Murther. To do them right, their Measures are Politickly taken: To make sure Work on't, there's nothing like Destroying of Principles; Practice must follow of Course. For to have no Good Principles, is to have no Reason to be Good. Now 'tis not to be expected that People should check their Appetites, and baulk their Satisfaction; they don't know why. If Virtue has no Prospect, 'tis not worth the owning. Who would be troubled with Conscience, if 'tis only a Bugbear, and has nothing in't but Vision and the Spleen?

My Collection from the English-Stage, is much short of what They are able to furnish. An Inventory of their Ware-House would have been a large Work: But being afraid of overcharging the Reader I thought a Pattern might do.

In

The Preface.

In Translating the Fathers, I have endeavour'd to keep close to their Meaning: However, in some few places, I have taken the Liberty of throwing in a Word or Two; To clear the Sense, to preserve the Spirit of the Original, and keep the English upon it's Legs.

There's one Thing more to acquaint the Reader with; 'Tis that I have Ventured to change the Terms of Mistress and Lover, for others somewhat more Plain, but much more Proper. I don't look upon this as any failure in Civility. As Good and Evil are different in Themselves, so they ought to be differently Mark'd. To confound them in Speech is the way to confound them in Practice. Ill Qualities ought to have ill Names, to prevent their being Catching. Indeed Things are in a great Measure Govern'd by Words: To Guild over a foul Character, serves

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only

The Preface.

only to perplex the Idea, to encourage
the Bad, and mislead the Unwary.
To treat Honour, and Infamy alike,
is an injury to Virtue; and a sort of
Levelling in Morality. I confess, I
have no Ceremony for Debauchery.
For to Complement Vice, is but one
Remove from worshipping the De-
vil.

March 5th. 1697.

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 6. r. *wasting Air*. p. 35. l. 4. r. *also read*. p. 44. l. 14. r. *Con-*
cionatrice. p. 45. l. 25. r. *under*. Ibid: l. 27. for. *And* r. *and*,
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chus. p. 91. l. 23. r. *Göva*. p. 92. l. 31. r. *Tractate*. p. 117.
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Broad. p. 238. l. 6. r. *precipue venare*. p. 246. l. 24. for
pas. r. *par*. p. 285. l. 27. r. *with*. p. 286. l. 13. r. *Charter*.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

1851.

THE Business of *Plays* is to recommend Virtue, and discountenance Vice; To shew the Uncertainty of Humane Greatness, the suddain Turns of Fate, and the Unhappy Conclusions of Violence, and Injustice: 'Tis to expose the Singularities of Pride and Fancy, to make Folly and False-hood contemptible, and to bring every Thing that is Ill under Infamy, and Neglect. This Design has been odly pursued by the *English-Stage*. Our *Poets* write with a different View, and are gone into another Intèrest. 'Tis true, were their Intentions fair, they might be *Serviceable* to this Purpose. They have in à great measure the Springs of Thought and Inclination in their Power. *Show, Musick, Action, and Rhetorick*, are moving Entertainments; and, rightly employ'd, would be very significant. But Force and Motion are Things indifferent, and the Use lies chiefly in the Application. These Advantages are now

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in the Eeemie's Hand, and under a very dangerous Management. Like Cannon feiz'd, they are pointed the wrong way ; and by the Strength of the Defence, the Mischief is made the greater. That this Complaint is not unreasonable, I shall endeavour to prove by shewing the Misbehaviour of the Stage, with respect to *Morality*, and *Religion*. Their *Liberties* in the following Particulars are intolerable, *viz.* Their *Smuttiness* of Expression ; Their *Swearing*, *Prophaneness*, and *Lewd Application* of Scripture ; Their *Abuse* of the *Clergy* ; Their *making* their *top Characters Libertines*, and giving them *Success* in their *Debauchery*. This Charge, with some other Irregularities, I shall make good against the Stage, and shew both the *Novelty* and *Scandal* of the *Practice*. And first, I shall begin with the *Rankness* and *Indecency* of their *Language*.

See also
Tract 2.
p. 85.
134.

Tract 3.
p. 20. 51.

C H A P.

CH A P. I.

The Immodesty of the Stage.

I N treating this Head, I hope the Reader does not expect that I should set down Chapter and Page, and give him the Citations at length. To do this would be a very Unacceptable and Foreign Employment. Indeed the Passages, many of them, are in no Condition to be handled: He that is desirous to see these Flowers, let him do it in their own Soil: 'Tis my Business rather to kill the Root than transplant it. But that the Poets may not complain of Injustice; I shall point to the Infection at a Distance, and refer in General to *Play* and *Person*.

Now among the Curiosities of this kind we may reckon Mrs. *Pinchwife*, *Horner*, and Lady *Fidget* in the *Country Wife*; Widow *Blackacre* and *Olivia* in the *Plain-Dealer*. These, though not all the exceptionable *Characters* are the most Remarkable. I'm sorry the Author should stoop his Wit thus low, and use his Understanding so unkindly. Some People

The Immodesty

appear Coarse and Slovenly out of Poverty: They can't well go to the Charge of Sense. They are Offensive, like Beggars, for want of Necessaries. But this is none of the *Plain-Dealer's* Case; He can afford his Muse a better Dress when he pleases. But then the Rule is, where the Motive is the less, the Fault is the greater. To proceed, *Jacinta*, *Elvira*, *Dalinda*, and *Lady Plyant*, in the *Mock Astrologer*, *Spanish-Fryar*, *Love-Triumphant*, and *Double-Dealer*, forget themselves Extreemly: And almost all the *Characters* in the *Old Batchelour*, are foul and nauseous. *Love* for *Love*, and the *Relapse*, strike sometimes upon this *Sand*, and so likewise does *Don Sebastian*.

I don't pretend to have read the *Stage* through; neither am I Particular to my Utmost. Here is quoting enough unless 'twere better: Besides, I may have Occasion to mention somewhat of this kind afterwards. But from what has been hinted already, the Reader may be over-furnished. Here is a large Collection of Debauchery; such *Pieces* are rarely to be met with: 'Tis sometimes painted at length too, and appears in great variety of Progress and Practice. It wears almost all sorts of Dresses to engage the Fancy, and fasten upon the Me-

of the STAGE.

Memory, and keep up the Charm from Languishing. Sometimes you have it in Image and Description ; sometimes by way of Allusion ; sometimes in disguise ; and sometimes without it. And what can be the Meaning of such a Representation, unless it be to Tincture the Audience, to Extinguish Shame, and make Lewdness a Diversion ? This is the Natural Consequence, and therefore one would think 'twas the Intention too. Such Licentious Discourse tends to no Point but to stain the Imagination, to awaken Folly, and to weaken the Defences of Virtue : It was upon the Account of these Disorders that *Plato* banish'd Poets his *Commonwealth* : And one of the *Fathers* calls Poetry, *Vinum Damónum*, an intoxicating Draught, made up of the Devil's *Dispensatory*.

I grant the Abuse of a Thing is no Argument against the use of it. However, Young People particularly should not entertain themselves with a Lewd Picture ; especially when 'tis drawn by a Masterly Hand. For such a Liberty may probably raise those Passions which can neither be discharged without Trouble, nor satisfied without a Crime : 'Tis not safe for a Man to trust his Virtue too far, for fear it should give

him the slip. But the Danger of such an Entertainment is but part of the Objection: 'Tis all Scandal and Meanness into the Bargain: It does in effect degrade Humane Nature; sinks Reason into Appetite, and breaks down the Distinctions between Man and Beast. Goats and Monkeys, if they could speak, would express their Brutality in such Language as this.

To argue the Matter more at large.

Smuttiness is a Fault in Behaviour as well as in Religion. 'Tis a very Coarse Diverſion, the Entertainment of those who are generally least both in Sense, and Station; The looser part of the *Mob*, have no true relish of Decency and Honour, and want Education, and Thought, to furnish out a genteel Conversation. Barrenness of Fancy makes them often take up with those Scandalous Liberties. A *Vicious* Imagination may blot a great deal of Paper at this rate with ease enough: And 'tis possible Convenience may sometimes invite to the Expedient. The Modern Poets seem to use *Smut* as the Old Ones did *Machines*, to relieve a fainting Invention. When *Pegasus* is jaded, and would stand still, he is apt like other *Tirs*, to run into every Puddle.

Obscenity in any Company is a rustick uncreditable Talent ; but among Women 'tis particularly rude. Such Talk would be very affrontive in Conversation, and not endur'd by any Lady of Reputation. Whence then comes it to pass, that those Liberties which disoblige so much in Conversation, should entertain upon the *Stage*? Do the Women leave all the regards to Decency and Conscience behind them, when they come to the *Play-House*? Or does the Place transform their Inclinations, and turn their former Aversions into Pleasure? Or were their Pretences to Sobriety elsewhere nothing but Hypocrisy and Grimace? Such Suppositions as these are all Satyr and Invective : They are rude Imputations upon the whole Sex. To treat the Ladies with such Stuff, is no better than taking their Money to abuse them. It supposes their Imagination vitious, and their Memories ill furnish'd : That they are practis'd in the Language of the Stews, and pleas'd with the Scenes of Brutishness. When at the same time the Customs of Education, and the Laws of Decency, are so very cautious, and reserv'd in regard to Women : I say so very reserv'd, that 'tis almost a Fault for them to Understand they are ill Used.

They can't discover their Disgust without Disadvantage, nor Blush without disservice to their Modesty. To appear with any skill in such Cant, looks as if they had fallen upon ill Conversation; or managed their Curiosity amiss. In a Word, he that treats the Ladies with such Discourse must conclude either that they like it, or they do not. To suppose the first, is a gross Reflection upon their *Virtue*. And as for the later Case, it entertains them with their own Aversion; which is ill-Nature, and ill-Manners enough in all Conscience. And in this Particular, *Custom* and *Conscience*, the Forms of Breeding, and the Maxims of Religion, are on the same Side. In other Instances, *Vice* is often too fashionable; But here a Man can't be a Sinner, without being a Clown.

In this respect the *Stage* is faulty to a Scandalous Degree of Nauseousness and Aggravation. For

1st. The *Poets* make Women speak Smuttily. Of this the Places before mention'd are sufficient Evidence: And if there was Occasion they might be Multiplied to a much greater Number: Indeed the *Comedies* are seldom clear of these Blemishes: And sometimes you have them in *Tragedy*. For Instance:
The

The *Orphans Monimia* makes a very improper Description; And the Royal *Leonora*, in the *Spanish-Fryar*, runs a strange Length in the History of Love, p. 50. And do Princesses use to make their Reports with such fulsome Freedoms? Certainly this *Leonora* was the first Queen of her Family. Such Raptures are too Luscious for *Joan* of *Naples*. Are these the *Tender Things* Mr. *Dryden* says the Ladies call on him for? I suppose he means the Ladies that are too Modest to shew their Faces in the Pit. This Entertainment can be fairly design'd for none but such. Indeed it hits their Palate exactly. It regales their Lewdness, graces their Character, and keeps up their Spirits for their Vocation: Now to bring Women under such Misbehaviour, is Violence to their Native Modesty, and a Misrepresentation of their Sex. For Modesty as Mr. *Rapin* observes, is the Character of Women. To represent them without this Quality, is to make Monstres of them; and throw them out of their Kind. *Euripides*, who was no negligent Observer of Humane Nature, is always careful of this Decorum. Thus *Phædra*, when possess'd with an infamous Passion, takes all imaginable Pains to conceal it. She is as regular

See Davis's
Life of Garrick
Vol. 2. p. 372.

R. B. D. up.
by Aristot.
Ec.

Eurip.
Hippolit.

The Immodesty

Hamlet.

Don Quix-
ot Relapsi-
Love for
Love.

gular and reserv'd in her Language as the most virtuous Matron. 'Tis true, the force of Shame and Desire ; The Scandal of Satisfying, and the Difficulty of parting with her Inclinations, disorder her to Distraction. However, her Frensy is not Lewd ; She keeps her Modesty even after She has lost her Wits. Had *Shakespear* secur'd this Point for his young Virgin *Ophelia*, the Play had been better contriv'd. Since he was resolv'd to drown the Lady like a Kitten, he should have set her a Swimming a little sooner. To keep her alive only to fally her Reputation, and discover the Rankness of her Breath, was very Cruel. But it may be said the Freedoms of Distraction go for nothing ; a Fever has no Faults, and a Man *non Compos*, may kill without Murther. It may be so : But then such People ought to be kept in dark Rooms, and without Company. To shew them, or let them loose, is somewhat unreasonable. But after all, the Modern Stage seems to depend upon this Expedient. Women are sometimes represented Silly, and sometimes Mad, to enlarge their Liberty, and screen their Impudence from Censure : This Politick Contrivance we have in *Marcella*, *Hoyden*, and *Miss Prue*.
How-

However it amounts to this Confession ; that Women, when they have their Understandings about them, ought to converse otherwise. In fine ; Modesty is the distinguishing Virtue of that Sex, and serves both for Ornament and Defence : Modesty was design'd by Providence as a Guard to Virtue ; And that it might be always at Hand, 'tis wrought into the Mechanism of the Body. 'Tis likewise proportion'd to the occasions of Life, and strongest in Youth when Passion is so too. 'Tis a Quality as true to Innocence, as the Senses are to Health ; whatever is ungrateful to the first, is prejudicial to the latter. The Enemy no sooner approaches, but the Blood rises in Opposition, and looks Defiance to an Indecency. It supplies the Room of Reasoning, and Collection : Intuitive Knowledge can scarcely make a quicker Impression ; And what then can be a surer Guide to the Unexperienc'd ? It teaches by sudden Instinct and Aversion ; This is both a ready and a powerful Method of Instruction. The Tumult of the Blood and Spirits, and the Uneasiness of the Sensation, are of singular Use. They serve to awaken Reason, and prevent surprize. Thus the Distinctions of Good and Evil
are

• The Immodesty

are refresh'd, and the Temptation kept at a proper Distance.

*Mock Astro-
loger. Old
Batchelour.*

2^{ly}. They Represent their single Ladies, and Persons of Condition, under these Disorders of Liberty. This makes the Irregularity still more Monstrous, and a greater Contradiction to Nature, and Probability : but rather than not be Vicious, they will venture to spoil a Character. This mismanagement we have partly seen already. *Jacinta*, and *Belinda* are farther Proof : And the *Double Dealer* is particularly remarkable. There are but *Four* Ladies in this *Play*, and three of the biggest of them are Whores. A Great Compliment to Quality, to tell them there is not above a quarter of them Honest ! This was not the Roman Breeding. *Terence* and *Plautus* his Strumpets were little People ; but of this more hereafter.

3^{ly}. They have oftentimes not so much as the poor Refuge of a Double Meaning to fly to. So that you are under a necessity either of taking Ribaldry or Nonsense. And when the Sentence has two Handles, the worst is generally turn'd to the Audience. The Matter is so Contrived that the Smut and Scum of the Thought rises uppermost ; And, like a Picture drawn to *Sight*, looks always upon the Company.

4^{ly}. And

4ly. And which is still more extraordinary, the *Prologues*, and *Epilogues* are sometimes Scandalous to the last Degree. I shall discover them for once, and let them stand like Rocks in the Margin. Now here, properly speaking, the *Actors* quit the Stage, and remove from Fiction into Life. Here they converse with the Boxes, and *Pit*, and address directly to the Audience. These Preliminary and Concluding Parts, are design'd to justify the Conduct of the *Play*, and bespeak the Favour of the Company. Upon such Occasions one would imagine if ever, the Ladies should be used with Respect, and the Measures of Decency observ'd. But here we have Lewdness without Shame or Example: Here the *Poet* exceeds himself. Here are such Strains as would turn the Stomach of an ordinary Debauchee, and be almost nauseous in the *Stews*. And to make it the more agreeable, Women are commonly pick'd out for this Service. Thus the *Poet* courts the Good Opinion of the Audience. This is the *Deffert* he Regales the Ladies with at the Close of the Entertainment: It seems, he thinks, they have admirable Palates! Nothing can be a greater Breach of Manners than such Liberties as these. If a Man would Study to outrage

Mock Astrologer.
Country Wife.
Cleomenes.
Old Batchelor.
As Crispigny's
to the British
Orphan.
Ep. to Dramatists

Quality

lity and *Virtue*, he could not do it more Effectually. But

54. *Smut* is still more insufferable with respect to Religion. The Heathen Religion was in a great Measure a *Mystery of Iniquity*. Lewdness was Consecrated in the Temples, as well as Practised in the *Stews*. Their Deities were great Examples of Vice, and worship'd with their own Inclination. 'Tis no wonder therefore their Poetry should be tinctured with their Belief, and that the *Stage* should borrow some of the Liberties of their Theology. This made *Mercury's* Procuring, and *Jupiter's* Adultery, the more passable in *Amphytrion*; Upon this Score *Gimnausum* is less Monstrous in Praying the Gods to send her store of Gallants. And thus *Charaa* defends his Adventure by the precedent of *Jupiter* and *Danae*. But the Christian Religion is quite of another Complexion. Both it's Precepts, and Authorities, are the highest discouragement to Licentiousness. It forbids the remotest Tendencies to Evil, banishes the Follies of Conversation, and obliges up to Sobriety of Thought. That which might pass for Raillery, and Entertainment in Heathenism, is detestable in Christianity. The Restraint of the Precept, and the Quality of the Deity,

Plaut.

Cistellar.

Terent.

Eunuch.

ty, and the Expectations of Futurity, quite alter the Case.

But notwithstanding the Latitudes of Paganism, the Roman and Greek *Theatres* were much more inoffensive than ours. To begin with *Plautus*. This Comedian, tho' the most exceptionable, is modest upon the Comparison. For

1st. He rarely gives any of the above-mention'd Liberties to Women; And when there are any Instances of the contrary, 'tis only in Prostituted and Vulgar People; And even these, don't come up to the Grossness of the *Modern Stage*.

For the Purpose. *Cleopatra* the Procu- *Alinar.*
ress borders a little upon Rudeness: *Lena* *Cistellar.*
and *Bacchis* the Strumpet are Airy *Bacchid.*
and somewhat over-merry, but not
Al' Angloise obscene. *Chalinus* in Wo- *Casin.*
man's Cloaths is the most remarkable.
Pasicompa, *Charinus* his Wench, talks too *Mercat.*
freely to *Lysimachus*; And so does *Sophro-* *Act. 3.*
clidisca, Slave to *Lemnoselene*. And lastly: *Persa.*
Phronesium a Woman of the Town uses a *Trucul.*
double entendre to *Stratophanes*. These
are the most censurable Passages, and I
think all of them with relation to Wo-
men; which considering how the World
goes is very moderate. Several of our
Single Plays shall far out-do all This
put

put together. And yet *Plautus* has upon the Matter left us Twenty entire *Comedies*. So that in short, these Roman Lasses are meer *Vestal Virgins*, comparatively speaking.

Perfa. 2ly. The Men who talk intemperately are generally *Slaves*; I believe *Dordalus* the Pander, and *Lusiteles* will be found the only exception: And this latter young Gentleman, drops but one over-airy Expression: And for this Freedom, the Poet seems to make him give Satisfaction in the rest of his Character. He disputes very handsomly by himself against irregular Love; The Discourse between him and *Philot* is instructive and well-managed. And afterwards he gives *Lesbonicus* a great deal of sober Advice, and declaims heartily against Luxury and Lewdness. Now by confining his Rudeness to little People, the Fault is much extenuated. For First, the representation is more Natural this way; And which is still better, 'tis not so likely to pass into Imitation: Slaves and Clowns are not big enough to spread Infection, and set up an ill Fashion. 'Tis possible the Poet might contrive these *Peasants* Offensive to discountenance the Practice. Thus the *Heilots* in *Sparta* were made drunk to keep Intemperance out of Credit

AE. 2. 1.

AE. 2. 2.

Credit. I don't mention this as if I approv'd the Expedient, but only to shew it a Circumstance of Mitigation and Excuse.

Farther, These Slaves and Pandars seldom run over and Play their Gambols before Women. There are but Four Instances of this kind as I remember, *Olympio*, *Palestrio*, *Dordalus*, and *Stratilax* are the Persons. And the Women they Discourse with, are two of them Slaves, and the third a Wench. But with our Dramatists, the Case is otherwise. With us

Casus. Mil.
Glor. Pers.
Trucul.

Smuttiness is absolute and unconfined. 'Tis under no restraint of Company, nor has any regard to Quality or Sex. Gentlemen talk it to Ladies, and Ladies to Gentlemen, with all the Freedom and Frequency imaginable. This is in earnest to be very hearty in the Cause: To give Title and Figure to Ill Manners, is the utmost that can be done. If Lewdness will not thrive under such Encouragement, it must e'en miscarry!

Atthly. *Plautus's* Prologues and Epilogues are inoffensive. 'Tis true, *Lambinus* pretends to fetch a double *entendre* out of that to *Panulus*, but I think there is a Strain in the Construction. His Prologue to the *Captivi*, is worth the observing.

Fabula huic operam date.

Pray wind the Play. The next Words give the Reason why it deserves regarding.

*Non enim pertractate facta estimo
Neq; spurcidi infunt verſus immemorabiles.*

We ſee here the Poet confeſſes Smut a ſcandalous Entertainment: That ſuch Liberties ought to fall under Neglect, to lie unmention'd, and be blotted out of Memory.

And that this was not a Copy of his Countenance, we may learn from his Compoſitions. His beſt Plays are almoſt always Modeſt, and clean Complexion'd. His *Amphytrio*, excepting the ungeneine Addition, is ſuch. His *Epidicus*, the Maſter-piece of his whole Collection, is inoffenſive throughout: And ſo are his *Menecmi*, *Rudens*, and *Trinummus*, which may be reckon'd amongſt ſome of his next Beſt. His *Truculentus*, another fine Play (though not entire) with a Heathen Allowance, is pretty Paſſable. To be ſhort: Where he is moſt a Poet, he is generally leaſt a Buffoon. And where the Entertainment is Smut, there is rarely any other Diſh well dress'd: The Contrivance is

com-

commonly Wretched, the Sense lean and full of Quibbles. So that his Understanding seems to have left him when he began to abuse it.

To conclude, *Plautus* does not dilate upon the Progress, Successes, and Disappointments of *Love*, in the *Modern* Way. This is nice Ground, and therefore he either stands off, or walks gravely over it. He has some Regard to the Retirements of Modesty, and the Dignity of Humane Nature, and does not seem to make Lewdness his Business. To give an Instance: *Silenium* is much gone in Love, *Cistellar.* but Modest withal, though formerly Debauch'd. *A. 1.*

She is sorry her Spark was forced from her, and in Danger of being lost. But then she keeps within compass, and never flies out into Indecency. *Alcesimarchus* is strangely smitten with this *Silenium*, and almost distracted to recover her. He is uneasy and blusters, and threatens, but his Passion goes off in Generals. He Paints no Images of his Extravagance, nor descends to any nauseous Particulars. *Ibid. A. 2.*

And yet after all, *Plautus* wrote in an Age not perfectly refin'd, and often seems to design his *Plays* for a Vulgar Capacity. 'Twas upon this View I suppose his *Characters* exceed Nature, and his ill Features

The Immobility

are drawn too large: His Old Men over-Credulous, his Misers Romanick, and his Coxcombs improbably Singular. And 'tis likely for this Reason his *Slaves* might have too much Liberty.

Heauton. Terence appear'd when Breeding was more exact, and the *Town* better polish'd; And he manages accordingly: He has but one faulty bordering Expression, which is that of *Chremes* to *Clitiphō*. This single Sentence apart, the rest of his Book is (I think) unfullied, and fit for the nicest Conversation. I mean only in reference to the Argument in Hand, for there are things in Him, which I have no intention to warrant. He is extremely careful in the Behaviour of his Women. Neither *Glycerium* in *Andria*, *Pamphila* in *Eunuchus*, or *Pamphila* in *Adelphi*, *Phanium* in *Phormio*, or *Philumena* in *Hecyra*, have any share of Conversation upon the Stage. Such Freedom was then thought too much for the Reservedness of a Maiden-Character. 'Tis true, in *Heautontimoroumenos* the Poet's Plot obliged *Antiphila* to go under the Disguise of *Bacchis* her Maid. Upon this Occasion they hold a little Discourse together: But then *Bacchis*, though she was a Woman of the *Town*, behaves her self with all the Decency imaginable. She does not talk
in

in the Language of her Profession : But commends *Antiphila* for her Virtue : *Antiphila* only says how constant she has been to *Clinia*, seems Surprised at his Arrival, and Salutes him civilly upon't, and we hear no more from her. Mr. *Dryden* seems to refer to this *Conduct* in his Dramatick Poesie. He Censures the *Romans* for making *Mutes* of their single Women. This he calls the *Breeding of the Old Elizabeth way, which was for Maids to be seen, and not to be heard.* Under Favour the old Discipline would be very serviceable upon the Stage. As Matters go, the *Mutes* are much too few. For certainly 'tis better to say nothing, than talk out of Character, and to ill purpose.

To return. The Virgin injured by *Charea* does nothing but weep, and won't so much as speak her Misfortune to the Women. But Comedy is strangely improved since that time; For *Dalinda* has a great deal more Courage, though the loss of her Virtue was her own Fault.

But *Terence* has that regard for Women, that he won't so much as touch upon an ill Subject before them. Thus *Chremes* was ashamed to mention any thing about his Son's Lewdness when his Wife was present.

Heauton.

A. 3. 4.

Pudet dicere hac prasente verbum turpe.

Eunuch.

A. 5. 4. 5.

Adelph.

A. 2. 3.

The Slaves in this *Comedian* are kept in Order, and civilly Bred. They Guard and Fence when Occasion requires, and step handsomly over a dirty Place. The Poet did not think Littleness and Low Education, a good Excuse for Ribaldry. He knew Infection at the weakest, might seize on some Constitutions: Besides the Audience was a Superior Presence, and ought to be consider'd. For how Negligent soever People may be at Home, yet when they come before their Betters, 'tis *Manners* to look wholsom.

Now though *Plautus* might have the richer Invention; *Terence* was always thought the most judicious *Comedian*. His Raillery is not only finer, and his Style better polish'd; but his *Characters* are more Just, and he seems to have reach'd farther into Life than the other. To take Leave of this Author, even his Strumpets are better behaved than our honest Women, than our Women of Quality of the *English-Stage*. *Bacchis* in *Heautontimoroumenos*, and *Bacchis* in *Hecyra*, may serve for Example. They are both modest, and converse not unbecoming their Sex. *Thais*, the most Accomplished in her

her way, has a great deal of Spirit and Wheedling in her Character; but talks no Smut. Eunuch.

Thus we see with what Caution and Sobriety of Language Terence manages. 'Tis possible this Conduct might be his own Modesty, and result from Judgment and Inclination. But however his Fancy stood, he was sensible the Coarse way would not do. The Stage was then under Discipline, the Publick Censors formidable, and the Office of the Choragus was originally to prevent the Excesses of Liberty. Casaub. Annot. in Curcul. Plant.

To this we may add, the Nobles had no Relish for Obscenity; 'twas the ready way to Disoblige them. And therefore 'tis Horace's Rule,

Nec immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta. De Arte Poet.
Offenduntur enim quibus est Equus, & Pater,
& res.

The old Romans were particularly careful there Women might not be affronted in Conversation: For this reason the Unmarried kept off from Entertainments for fear of learning new Language. And in Greece no Woman above the degree of a Slave, was treated Abroad by any but Relations. 'Tis probable the old Comedy was silenced at Athens upon this Score, as Var. apud Nonium. Corn. Ne.p.

*Arist. lib.
4. de Mor,
cap. 14.*

*Vit. Eurip.
Ed. Cantab.
1694.*

well as for Defamation. For as *Aristotle* observes, the new Set of *Comedians* were much more modest than the former. In this Celebrated Republick, if the Poets wrote any thing against Religion or Good Manners, they were tried for their *Misbehaviour*, and liable to the highest Forfeitures.

It may not be amiss to observe, that there are no Instances of Debauching Married Women, in *Plautus*, nor *Terence*, no nor yet in *Aristophanes*. But on our Stage how common is it to make a Lord, a Knight, or an Alderman a Cuckold? The Schemes of Success are beaten out with great variety, and almost, drawn up into a Science. How many Snares are laid for the undermining of *Virtue*, and with what Triumph is the Victory proclaim'd? The Fineness of the Plot, and the Life of the Entertainment often lies in these Contrivances. But the *Romans* had a different Sense of these Matters, and saw through the Consequences of them. The Government was awake upon the Theatre, and would not suffer the Abuses of Honour, and Family, to pass into Diversion. And before we part with these *Comedians* we may take notice that there are no Smutty Songs in their Plays; in which the *English* are extremely Scandalous. Now to work up

*Love for
Love.*

up their Lewdness with *Versa*, and *Mu-* Love Tri-
sick, doubles the Force of, the *Mischief*. umph, &c.
 It makes it more portable and at Hand,
 and drives it Stronger upon Fancy and
 Practice.

To dispatch the *Latin*s altogether, *Seneca*
 is clean throughout the Piece; and stands
 generally off from the point of Love. He
 has no Courting unless in his *Hercules Fu-* p. 14.
rens: And here the Tyrant *Lyens* addres- Ed. Sciv.
 ses *Megara* very briefly, and in modest and
 remote Language. In his *Thebais*, *Oedipus's*
 Incest is reported at large, but without any
 shocking Description. 'Tis granted *Phae-*
dra speaks her Passion plainly out, and owns
 the strength of the Impression, and is far
 less prudent than in *Euripides*. But though Hippol.
 her Thoughts appear too freely, her Lan-
 guage is under Discipline.

Let us now travel from *Italy* into
Greece, and take a View of the Theatre
 at *Athens*. In this City the Stage had
 both its Beginning and highest Improve-
 ment. *Aeschylus* was the first who ap-
 pear'd with any Reputation. His Genius
 seems Noble, and his Mind Generous,
 willing to transfuse it self into the Au-
 dience, and inspire them with a Spirit
 of Bravery. To this purpose his Stile
 is Pompous, Martial, and Enterprising.
 There is Drum and Trumpet in his
 Verse.

Verse. 'Tis apt to excite an Heroick Ardour, to awaken, warm, and push forward to Action. But his Metal is not always under Management. His Inclination for the *Sublime*, carries him too far: He is sometimes Embarrass'd with *Epithets*. His Metaphors are too stiff, and far fetch'd; and he rises rather in Sound, than in Sense. However generally speaking, his Materials are both shining and solid, and his Thoughts lofty, and uncommon. This Tragedian had always a Nice regard to Good Manners. He knew corrupting the People was the greatest Disservice to the Commonwealth; And that Publick Ruine was the effect of general Debauchery. For this Reason he declines the Business of Amours, and declares expressly against it. Now here we can't expect any length of Testimony. His Aversion to the Subject makes him touch very sparingly upon it. But in this Case, there is no need of much Citation. His very Omissions are Arguments, and his Evidence is the stronger for being short. That little I meet with shall be produced.

*Aristoph.
Ran.*

*Xenoph.
263. Ed.
Steph.*

*Orest. 48
Ed. Cantab.*

1st. *Orestes* was obliged by the Oracle to revenge his Father's Death in the Murder of his *Mother*. When he was going to kill her, he mentions her Cruelty, but waves her Adultery. *Euripides* ap-

approv'd this Reservedness and make his
Electra practise it upon the same Occasion.
Æschylus in his next Play, complements his
 Country with a great deal of Address in
 the *Persons* of the *Eumenides*. They are
 very Gentile and Poetical in their Civilities:
 Among other things they wish the Vir-
 gins may all Marry and make the Coun-
 try Populous: Here the *Poet* does but just
 glance upon the Subject of Love; and yet ^{*Euphr.*}
 he governs the Expression with such care, ^{305.}
 that the wishes contain a Hint to Sobriety,
 and carry a Face of Virtue along with
 them.

The *Double Dealer* runs Riot upon
 such an Occasion as this; and gives
 Lord *Touchwood* a mixture of Smut and ^{p. 79.}
 Pedantry to conclude with, and yet
 this Lord was one of his best Characters:
 But *Poets* are now grown Absolute with-
 in themselves, and may put Sense and
 Quality upon what Drudgeries they please.
 To return. *Danaus* cautions his Daugh-
 ters very handsomly in point of Beha-
 viour. They were in a strange Country,
 and had Poverty and Dependance to
 struggle with: These were Circumstances
 of Danger, and might make him the
 more pressing. He leaves therefore a so-
 lemn Charge with them for their Securi-
 ty, bids them never to subsist upon Infamy,

my, but to prefer their Virtue to their Life.

Ἰκίτ. 340.

Μόνον εὐλαΐσαι τὰς δ' ἐπιτελαῖ πατρὸς
τὸ Σοφοκλέους τιμῶσα τὴ βίον πλεον.

Our Poets I suppose would call this Preaching, and think it a dull Business. However I can't forbear saying an honest Heathen is none of the worst Men: A very Indifferent Religion well Believed, will go a great way.

To proceed. *Sophocles* appear'd next upon the Stage, and was in earnest an Extraordinary Person. His Conduct is more Artificial, and his Style more just, than that of *Æschylus*. His Characters are well drawn, and Uniform with themselves: His Incidents, are often surprising, and his Plots unprecipitated. There is nothing but what is Great, and Solemn Throughout. The Reasoning is well coloured. The Figures are sometimes Bold, but not Extravagant. There are no Flights of Bombast, no Towering above Nature and Possibility: In short, nothing like *Don Sebastian's* Reigning in his *Atomes*.

Don Sebast.
p. 12.

This Tragedian like *Æschylus* does not often concern himself with Amours, and when he does, nothing can be more temperate, and decent. For Example where
the

the Incest of *Oedipus* is described, the Offensiveness of the Idea is screen'd off and broken by Metaphorical and distant Expressions. In another Play, *Creon* resolves to put *Antigone* to Death for presuming to bury *Polynices*. This Lady and *Hemon* *Creon's* Son were very far engaged; *Hemon* endeavours to dissuade his Father from *Antigone's* Execution: He tells him the burying her Brother tho' against his Order, was a popular Action. And that the People would resent her being Punish'd: But never so much as mentions his own Concern unless in one Line; which was so obscure, that *Creon* misunderstood him. *Antigone* amongst her other Misfortunes laments her dying Young and Single, but says not one word about *Hemon*. The Poet takes care not to bring these two Lovers upon the Stage together, for fear they might prove unmanageable. Had they been with us, they had met with kinder treatment. They might have had Interviews and Time and Freedom enough. Enough to mud their Fancy, to tarnish their Quality, and to make their Passion Scandalous. In the Relation of *Hemon's* Death, his Love is related too, and that with all the Life and Pathos imaginable. But the Description is within the Terms of Honour; The tenderesses are Solemn, as well as Soft: They

Oedip. Tyr. Ed. Steph.

Antig. 242, 244.

Ibid. 264.

Ibid. 264. They move to Pity and Concern, and go no farther. In his *Trachinia* the *Chorus* owns the Force of Love next to irresistible; gently hints the Intrigues of the Gods, and then passes on to a handsom Image of the Combat between *Achelous* and *Hercules*. We see how lightly the *Poet* touches upon an amorous Theme: He Glides along like a Swallow upon the Water, and skims the Surface, without dipping a Feather.

Trach. 348. *Sophocles* will afford us no more, let us therefore take a View of *Euripides*. 'Tis the Method of this Author to decline the Singularities of the Stage, and to appear with an Air of Conversation. He delivers great Thoughts in Common Language, and is dress'd more like a Gentleman than a Player. His Distinction lies in the perspicuity of his Style; In Maxim, and Moral Reflection; In his peeuiliar Happiness for touching the Passions, especially that of Pity: And lastly, In exhausting the Cause, and Arguing *Pro* and *Con*, upon the stretch of Reason. So much by way of Character. And as for the Matter before us, He is entirely Ours. We have had an Instance or two already in *Electra* and *Phadra*: To go on to the rest. In his *Hippolytus* he calls *Whoring*, stupidity and playing the Fool. And to be Chaste and Regular, is with him, as well as with

with *Æschylus*, *Σοφοκλ.* As much as to say, 'tis the Consequence of Sense, and right Thinking. *Phædra* when her Thoughts were embarrass'd with *Hippolytus*, endeavours to disentangle her self by Argument. She declaims with a great deal of Satyr against intemperate Women; she concluded rather to die than dishonour her Husband and Stain her Family. The Blemishes of Parents, as she goes on, often stuck upon their Children, and made them appear with Disadvantage. Upon this, the *Chorus* is transported with the Virtue of her Resolution, and cries out.

*Macla τὸ
Μῆγ' Ed.
Cant. 241,
250, 252.*

Οὐδ' οὐδ'. Τὸ σῦρρον ὡς ἀπανταχὺ καλὸν
καὶ δὲ ζαν ἰδὼν ἐν ἑσπετοῖς κομίζεται.

*Ibid. 232,
233.*

How becoming a Quality is Modesty in all Places?

How strangely does it burnish a Character, and oblige ones Reputation?

The Scholiast upon these Verses of *Hippolytus*

Σοὶ τὴν ὃ πλακτὴν Στέφανον ἢ ἀκχεῖ
Λημῶν @, &c.

Makes this Paraphrase. 'That a Poet's Mind should be clean and unsullied: And that the Muses being Virgins, their Performances

'formances should agree with their Condition.

Androm.
p. 303.

Iphig. in
Aulid. p. 51

Helen. 275,
278.

Mourning
Bride. p. 36.

To proceed. *Hermione* complains against *Andromache* because she was entertain'd by her Husband: For this *Andromache* tells her she talk'd too much for a Young Woman, and discover'd her Opinion too far. *Achilles* at the first sight of *Chyremnestra*, lets her understand he was as much taken with the Sobriety of her Air, as with the rest of her fine Face and Person. She receives the Complement kindly, and commends him for commending Modesty. *Menelaus* and *Helen* after a long Absence, manage the surprize of their good Fortune handsomly. The most tender Expression stands clear of ill meaning. Had *Osmin* parted with *Almeria* as civilly as these Two met, it had been much better. That Rant of Smut and Profaneness might have been spared. The Reader shall have some of it.

O my *Almeria*!

What do the Damn'd endure but to despair,
But knowing Heaven, to know it lost for ever.

Were it not for the Creed, these Poets would be cramp't in their Courtship, and Mightily at a loss for a Simile! But *Osmin* is in a wonderful Passion. And truly

truly I think his Wits are in some Danger,
as well as his Patience. You shall hear.

*What are all Wracks, and Whips, and Wheels
to this?*

*Are they not soothing Softness, sinking Ease,
And wasting Air to this?*

*Sinking Ease, and wasting Air, I confess
are strange Comforts : This Comparison
is somewhat oddly equipp'd, but Lovers,
like sick People, may say what they please.
Almeria takes this Speech for a Pattern,
and suits it exactly in her return ;*

*O I am struck, thy Words are Bolts of Ice ;
Which shot into my Breast, now melt and
chill me.*

*Bolts of Ice ; Yes most certainly ! For
the Cold is struck up into her Head, as
you may perceive by what follows :*

I chatter, shake, and faint with thrilling Fears.

By the way, 'tis a mighty wonder to
hear a Woman Chatter ! But there is no
jesting, for the Lady is very bad. She
won't be held up by any Means, but Crys
out,

—lower yet, down, down :

D

One

The Immodesty

One would think she was learning a Spaniel to Set. But there's something behind.

— no more we'll lift our Eyes,
But prone and dumb, Rot the firm Face of
Earth,
With Rivers of incessant scalding Rain.

These Figures are some of them as stiff as Statues, and put me in mind of Sylvester's Dubartas.

Now when the Winter's keener breath began
To ChrySTALLize, the Baltick Ocean,
To glaze the Lakes, to bridle up the Floods,
And periwig with Snow the bald-pate Woods.

Spanish
Friar. Ep.
Dcd.

I take it, the other Verses are somewhat of Kin to these, and shall leave them to Mr. Dryden's Reflection. But then as for Soothing Softness, Sinking Ease, Wasting Air, thrilling Fears, and incessant Scalding Rain; It puts me to another stand. For to talk a little in the way of the Stage. This Litter of Epithets makes the Poem look like a Bitch over-stock'd with Puppies, and sucks the Sense almost to Skin and Bone. But all this may pass in a Play-House: False Rhetorick and false Jewels, do well together. To return to Euripides. Cassandra in reporting the Misfortunes of
the

the *Greeks* stops at the Adulteries of *Clytemnestra* and *Aegiala*, and gives this handsom reason for making a Halt :

Σίαν αὖτις τὰ ἰχθὺς μὲνδ' αὖτις καὶ
Γέροντ' αἰεὶδ' ἢ τίς ὑμῖν οὐ κακὸν.

Tread p.
146.

*Foul Things are best unsaid, I'm for no Muse,
That loves to flourish on Debauchery.*

Some Things are dangerous in Report, as well as practice, and many times a Disease in the Description. This *Euripides* was aware of, and manag'd accordingly, and was remarkably regular both in Style and Manners. How wretchedly do we fall short of the Decencies of Heathenism! There's nothing more ridiculous than *Modesty* on our Stage. 'Tis counted an ill-bred Quality, and almost shamed out of Use. One would think Mankind were not the same, that Reason was to be read Backward, and Virtue and Vice had chang'd Place.

Plain De-
scr. p. 21.

Provok'd
Wife, p. 47.

What then? Must Life be huddled over, Nature left imperfect, and the Humour of the Town not shewn? And pray where lies the Grievance of all this? Must we relate whatever is done, and is every Thing fit for Representation? Is a Man that has the Plague proper to make a

Sight of? and muſt he needs come abroad when he breaths Infection, and leaves the *Tokens* upon the Company? What then, muſt we know nothing? Look you! All Experiments are not worth the making. 'Tis much better to be ignorant of a Diſeaſe than to catch it. Who would wound himſelf for Information about Pain, or ſmell a Stench for the ſake of the Diſcovery? But I ſhall have occaſion to encounter this Objection afterwards, * and therefore ſhall diſmiſs it at preſent.

* Remarks
upon Quix-
ot.

The *Play-Houſe* at *Athens* has been hitherto in *Order*; but are there no Inſtances to the contrary? Does not *Ariſtophanes* take great Liberties, and make Women ſpeak extraordinary Sentences? He does ſo. But his Preſident ſignifies nothing in the Caſe. For,

1^{ſt}. We have both the Reaſon of the Thing, and all the Advantage of Authority on the other ſide. We have the Practice and Opinion of Men of much greater Senſe and Learning than himſelf. The beſt Philoſophers and Poets, Criticks and Orators, both Greek and Latin, both Ancient and Modern, give the Cauſe againſt him. But *Ariſtophanes* his own *Plays* are ſufficient to ruin his Authority. For,

1^{ſt}. He diſcovers himſelf a downright Atheiſt. This Charge will be eaſily made good

good against him, by comparing his *Nubes* with his other *Plays*. The Design of his *Nubes* was to expose *Socrates*, and make a Town-Jest of him. Now this Philosopher was not only a Person of great Sense and Probity, but was likewise suppos'd to refine upon the Heathen Theology, to throw off the Fabulous part of it, and to endeavour to bring it back to the Standard of Natural Religion. And therefore *Justin Martyr*, and some others of the *Fathers*, look'd on him as a Person of no Pagan Belief, and thought he suffer'd for the Unity of the God-Head. This Man, *Aristophanes* makes fine sport with, as he fancies: He puts him in a Fool's Coat, and then points at him. He makes *Socrates* instruct his Disciple *Strepsiades* in a new Religion, and tell him that he did not own the Gods in the *Vulgar* Nub. Act 1. Sc. 3. p. 104. Ed. Amstel. Notion. He brings him in elsewhere, affirming, that the *Clouds* are the only Deities. Which is the same Lash which *Jurvenal* gives the *Jews*, because they Worshipp'd but one single Sovereign Being.

Nil prater Nubes & Caeli numen adorant. Sat. 14.

Socrates goes on with his Lecture of Divinity, and declares very roundly, that there is no such thing as *Jupiter*. Afterwards he advances farther, and endeavours P. 106.

to get *Strepsiades* under Articles to acknowledge no other Gods, but *Chaos*, the *Clouds*, and the *Tongue*. At last the *Poet* brings the *Philosopher* to publick Penance for his Singularities: He sets Fire to his *School* for teaching Young People (as he pretends) to dispute against Law and Justice; for advancing Atheistick Notions, and Burslesquing the Religion of the Country.

Aff. 5. p.
176.

Plat. Apol.
Socrat.

That *Socrates* was no *Atheist*, is clear from Instances enough. To mention but one: The Confidence he had in his *Dæmon*, or *Genius*, by which he govern'd his Affairs, puts it beyond all dispute. However 'tis plain *Aristophanes* was not of his Religion. The *Comedian* was by no means for correcting the Common Perswasion. So that he must either be an Orthodox Heathen, or nothing at all. Let us see then with what Respect he treats the received *Divinities*. This *Play*, where one would not expect it, discovers somewhat of his Devotion. In the beginning of it *Phidippides*, who was a sort of *New-Market Spark*, swears by *Jocky Neptune*, that he had a strange Kindness for his Father *Strepsiades*. Upon this the Old Man replies; *No Jocky, if you Love me; that Deity has almost undone me*. This was making somewhat bold with *Neptune*, who was *Jupiter's* Brother, Sovereign of a whole *Element*, and had no less

Nub. p. 26.

less than the Third share of the Universe ! Certainly *Aristophanes* had no venture at Sea, or else must think the *Trident* signified but very little. But this is meer Ceremony to what follows. In his first *Play*, *Plutus* pretends he had a mind to oblige only Men of Probity; but *Jupiter* had made him blind, on purpose that he might not distinguish Honest Men from Knaves; For to be plain, *Jupiter* had a Pique against Good People. Towards the end of this *Comedy*, *Mercury* is abused by *Cario*, and acts a ridiculous, and lessening part himself. Afterwards he complains heavily that since *Plutus* was cured of his Blindness, the Business of Sacrificing fell off, and the Gods were ready to starve. This *Mercury* has the same ill Usage with the Poets Knaves, Informers, and Lewd Women; From all this stuff put together, his meaning is pretty plain, viz. That Religion was no better than an Imposture supported by Art, and Ignorance: And that when Men's Understandings were awake, and their Eyes a little open, they would have more Discretion than to be at any expence about the Gods.

*Plut. A. 1.
Sc. 2.*

This I take to be part of the Moral of his Fable. If we look farther into him, we shall see more of his Mind. His *Rana* makes Merry with the Heathen Scheme of

The Immodesty

Heaven and Hell. Here *Charon* and the *Stygian Frogs* are brought in Comically enough. And that you may understand his Opinion more perfectly, we are told, that he that Bilks his *Catamite* after a *Sodomitical Abuse*, is thrown into the Common-shore of *Hades*. And what Company do you think he is lodg'd with? Why with those who Perjure themselves, with those who kick their Fathers and Mothers. It seems in the *Poet's Justice* a Man might as good be false to his Oath, as to his Lewdness. To disappoint the *Stews*, is every jot as great a Crime, as to fly in the Face of Nature, and outrage our Parents. His Quartering his Malefactors thus critically, was without Question on purpose to Banter the Perwasion of future Punishment. In the same Play, *Xanthias* bids *Aacus* answer him by *Jove*, *Ὅς οὐδὲν ἴσιν ὑπομαρτυρίας*. This little Scoundrel of a Slave has the Manners to make *Jupiter's* Quality no better than his own. To go on with him: In his *Aves* he speaks out to purpose. Here *Pisphetaerus* tells *Epops*, that if the *Birds* would build a Castle in the Air, they might intercept the Fumes of the Sacrifices, and starve the Gods, unless they would come to, and be Tributary. It seems the *Birds* had very good Pretences to execute this Project; for they were

were ancients than *Jupiter* and *Saturn*,
 and Govern'd before the Gods. And to
 speak truth, were more capable of the
 Function. Their Adviser goes on to in-^{p. 536,}
 form them, that after they had built their^{538, 545.}
 Penfile City, and fortified the Air, their
 next Business was to demand their ancient
 Sovereignty: If *Jupiter* refused to quit,
 they were to declare a Holy War against
 him, and the rest of the Confederate
 Gods, and to cut off the Communicati-
 on between Heaven and Earth. *Pis-*
thetarus grows very warm in his new
 Interest and swears by *Jove*, that Men^{p. 542.}
 ought to Sacrifice to the *Birds*, and not
 to *Jupiter*. And if Things came to a
 Rupture, and *Jupiter* grew Troublesome,^{p. 582.}
 he undertakes to send a Detachment of
 Eagles against him; with Orders to storm
 his Palace with Flambeaux, and fire it
 about his Ears. At last to prevent the
 Calamities of a War, *Hercules* proposes^{ibid.}
 an Accommodation, and is willing *Ju-*
piter should resign. *Neptune* calls him
 a Block-head for his pains, because he
 was Heir at Law, and after *Jupiter's* De-
 cease, was of Course to succeed in his Do-
 minions. Once more, and I have done:
 In *Eirene*, *Trygaus* speaks in a menacing
 way; That unless *Jupiter* gave him Satis-
 faction in his Business, he would inform^{p. 602.}
 against

Eiren. 616. against him as a disaffected Person, and a betrayer of the Liberties of Greece. I might add many other Instances, and some more Scandalous than any I have mentioned; But these are sufficient to shew the Author's Sentiment: And is it any wonder an Atheist should misbehave himself in point of Modesty? What can we expect less from those who Laugh at the Being of a God, at the Doctrines of Providence, and the Distinctions of Good and Evil? A *Sceptick* has no Notion of Conscience, no Relish for Virtue, nor is under any Moral restraints from Hope or Fear. Such a one has nothing to do but to consult his Ease, and gratifie his Vanity, and fill his Pocket. But how these Ends are compassed, he has no Squeamishness or Scruples about it. 'Tis true when the Methods of Lewdness will take, they are generally most agreeable. This way suits their Talent, and screens their Practice, and obliges their Malice. For nothing is a greater Eye-sore to these Men, than Virtue and Regularity. What a Pleasure is it then to be admired for Mischief, to be reveng'd on Religion, and to see Vice prosper and improve under our Hands! To return: Beside, *Aristophanes's* Atheism, I have a Second Objection to his Authority, and that is want of Judgment.

ment. If we examine his Plays we shall find his Characters improper, or ununiform; either wrong at first, or unsteady in the Right. For the purpose: In his *Nubes*. A. 3. S. 3. p. 146, 150. He puts dirty expressions in the Mouth of his Man of Probity, makes him declaim viciously against Vice, and correct Scurrility with Impudence; Now what can be more idle and senseless, than such Conduct as this? Especially when this *Justus* as he calls him, had told them in the beginning of his Speech, that People used to be well flash'd for such Fooling, when Government and Discipline were in their due Force. The *Chorus* of his *Rana* slides into the same Inconsistency of Precept, and Practice. Farther, in the Progress of this Play; *Æschylus* falls a rallying contrary to his Humour, and jelts away his own Arguments at a very unseasonable Juncture, when he was disputing for no less prize than the Laureatship. This *Tragedian* after he had play'd a little with the Story of *Bellerophon*, goes on in the same strain; and charges *Euripides* that he had furnish'd all sorts of People with Sawciness and Prattle. The *Schools* and *Academies* were spoil'd by this means; So that the Boys were often whip'd, and the Boatswains drubb'd, for their

p. 142.

p. 200.

p. 242.

p. 244.

their Chattering. These Comical Levities come with an ill Grace from *Æschylus*. His Character was quite different both in Reality, and in the Play before us. He is all along represented as a Person of a serious Temper, of a reserv'd Loftiness, Cholerick, and tender of his Honour to an Excess, and almost in a rage at the Affront of a Rival, and being forc'd to enter the List with *Euripides*. The case standing thus, neither the Man, nor the Business, would admit of Drolling. Another Instance of his want of Conduct we have in his *Concionatores*. Here *Blepyrus* and some others of his Legislative Assembly, talk at a very dirty insipid rate: The Lowest of the Mob, can hardly jest with less Wit, and more Lewdness. And to make their Discourse more remarkable; These douty Members were just going to the House, and had their Heads full of the Good of the Nation, when they entertain'd themselves thus decently. And are these little Buffoons fit to consult *de Arduis Regni, &c.* to give Authority to Law, and Rules for publick Life? Do's Ribaldry and Nonsense become the Dignity of their Station, and the Solemnity of their Office? To make his *Parliament-Men* play the Fool thus egregiously, must needs have a great deal

p. 700.

p. 708.

deal of *Decorum*, and State-Policy in the Contrivance ; And is just as wise as if a *Painter* should have Drawn them in the Habit of *Jack-Puddings*, and *Mery-Andrews*. But *Aristophanes* has still higher Flights of Absurdity. He won't so much as spare the Gods, but makes them act these little Parts of Clownishness and Infamy. *Bacchus* and *Hercules* in his *Rane* are forced to talk Smut and rally like *Link-Boys*, and do almost all the Tricks of *Bartholomew-Fair*. To mention something that will bear the quoting. *Bacchus* enquires of *Hercules* the readiest way to *Hades*, or the other World. He bids him either Hang, or Poyson himself, and he cannot miss the Road. This is *Hercules's* Humour to a Tittle ! And represents him as much to the Life, as an *Ape* would do the *Grand Rane*.^{p. 182. p. 186.} *Signior* at a publick Audience ! This with a short Sentence or two of Lewdness, is the hardest of *Hercules* his Usage : And 'tis well he escap'd so ; for *Bacchus* is treated much worse. He appears upon the Disadvantages of a Clownish Debauchee, and a Coward.^{p. 191.} And is terribly afraid of a *Spectre*.^{194, 196.} When he comes before *Eacus*, this Judge is very rough with him ; and tries his pretences to a Deity by Bastinado : *Bacchus* howls in the drubbing, and had almost spoil'd all.^{Act 2 Sc. 6.}

Now

Now do's this pauly Behaviour agree with the Heathen Theology, with the Common Opinion concerning *Bacchus* and *Hercules*? Do's a *Blen-Cap* and a *Ladle*, become the Sons of *Jupiter*, and the Objects of Religious Worſhip? Thoſe who at the loweſt, were counted the Conquerors of the World, and more than Men both by Birth and Enterprize? *Sophocles* and *Euripides* make theſe two Perſons manage at a quite different rate of Decency. 'Tis no defence to ſay, *Ariſtophanes* wrote Comedy, and ſo was obliged to make his Scenes more diverting. This excuſe I ſay, is defective; for a Comedian ought to imitate Life and Probability, no leſs than a Tragedian. To Metamorphoſe Characters, and preſent Contradictions to Common Belief, is to write *Farce* inſtead of *Plays*. Such Comedians like *Theſpis* ought to have a travelling Stage, and take the Air with *Porcupines* and *Dromedaries*. If 'tis ſaid that Gravity and Greatneſs do's not ſuit the Complection and Entertainment of Comedy. To this I anſwer, that therefore the Perſons ſhould be choſen accordingly. They ſhould have nothing in their known Humor and Condition too Noble and ſolemn for Trifling. 'Tis *Horace's* advice.

Aut famam sequere, aut convenientia fingi
Scriptor. De Art. Poet.

Let us remember that Operations always resemble the Nature from whence they flow. Great Persons should therefore have a Correspondent Behaviour assign'd them. To make *Beings* much Superior to the Biggest of Mankind, talk below the Least; is absurd and ridiculous. This *Aristophanes* seems sensible of, in his defence of *Æschylus*. Here *Euripides* objects to *Æschylus*, that he was too rumbling, noisy, and bombastick, over-affecting that which *Horace* calls

Ampullas, & sesquipedalia Verba.

To this *Æschylus* Answers, that the Thoughts, and Designs of *Heroes* must be deliver'd in Expressions proportion'd to their Greatness. It being likely that the Demi-Gods spoke up to their Dignity and Stature: And as they were distinguish'd by the richness of their Habit, so they had a more Magnificent Language than other Mortals. To this *Euripides* replies nothing; from whence you may conclude the *Poet* thought the Apology not unreasonable. In short, *Aristophanes* had

Rane. A.J.
Sc. 1. Con-
cious.

had Sense, but he does not always use it. He is not equal, and uniform. Sometimes you have him flat and foolish a good while together. And where he has Spirit, 'tis oftentimes lavished away to little purpose. His Buffoonery is commonly too strong for his Judgment. This makes him let fly his Jest without regard to Person or Occasion: And thus by Springing the *Game* too soon, the Diversion is lost. I could make several other Material Objections against the Conduct of his *Plays*; But this being not necessary, I shall observe in the

Rane p.
238.

3d. Place. That notwithstanding the scandalous Liberty for which *Aristophanes* is so Remarkable; yet in his Lucid Intervals, when Sense and Sobriety return upon him, he pronounces against his own Practice. In the contest between *Æschylus* and *Euripides*, *Bacchus* is made the Umpire of the Controversie. *Æschylus* begins with a Question, And asks *Euripides* what 'tis which makes a *Poet* admir'd? He answers. 'Tis for the address of his Conduct, and the handsome Turns of Morality in his Poems. 'Tis because his performance has a Tendency to form the Audience to Virtue, and Improvement. *Æschylus* demands of him farther; But suppose you debauched the Age

Age, and made an Honest and a Brave People Lewd, and good for nothing, what do you deserve then? Here *Bacchus* interposes, and crys out, What does he deserve? A Halter! Pray don't ask so plain a Question. And afterwards we are told that *Poets* are valuable only for describing Things useful, in Life and Religion; for polishing Inventions; and setting off great Examples with Lustre, and Advantage. In the Progress of the Dispute, *Æschylus* p. 240. taxes *Euripides* with being too uncautious in his Representations; and tells him, that *Poets* ought to conceal that which is vicious in Story; and entertain with nothing but Virtue and Sobriety; He goes on Reprimanding *Euripides* for his *Dramatick* Incests, Strumpets, and Amours: And as p. 242. for himself, to his best remembrance, he 244. never brought any Love-Intrigues upon the Stage.

This is a very significant Expostulation; and contains very good Rules for the Tryal of the *Muses*: But if the *English-Stage* should be obliged to this Test, *Aristophanes* must set Fire to it, and that with much more Reason than, to *Socrates* his School. Now that *Æschylus* spoke *Aristophanes*'s Sense, is pretty plain: For first As to the Business of Love, *Aristophanes* always declines it; He never patches up a

p. 255,
267.

Play with *Courtship*, and *Whining*, though he wrote nothing but *Comedy*. In the next place the *Chorus*, which is usually the *Poet's* Interpreter, speaks honourably of *Æschylus*, even to a Preference; And at last Judge *Bacchus* gives Sentence for him.

Thus we see *Aristophanes* Confutes his own Lewdness, and comes in Evidence against himself. This, with the other two Exceptions I have made good against him, are sufficient to take off the force of the *Precedent*, and make him an insignificant Authority.

To what I have observ'd from the Stage of the Ancients, I could add the Authorities of *Aristotle*, and *Quintilian*, both extraordinary Persons, but I shall reserve their Testimony till afterwards.

To come Home, and near our own Times: The *English-Theatre* from Queen *Elizabeth* to King *Charles II.* will afford us something not inconsiderable to our purpose.

As for *Shakespear*, he is too guilty to make an Evidence: But I think he gains not much by his Misbehaviour; He has commonly *Plautus's Fate*, where there is most Smut, there is least Sense.

Ben Johnson is much more reserved in his Plays, and declares plainly for Modesty in his *Discoveries*; some of his Words are these.

A

A Just Writer, whom he calls a *True Artificer*, will avoid *Obscene and Effeminate Phrase*. Where *Manners and Fashions* Discov. p. are Corrupted, *Language* is so too. The ex- 700. cess of *Feasts and Apparel*, are the *Notes* of p. 701. a sick State; and the *Wantonness of Language*, of a sick Mind. A little after, he returns to the Argument, and applies his Reasoning more particularly to the Stage. *Poetry*, (says he) and *Picture*, both behold *Pleasure and Profit*, as their common Object, but should abstain from all base Pleasures, lest they should wholly err from their End; And while they seek to better Men's Minds, destroy their *Manners*: *Insolent and Obscene Speeches*, and *Jests* upon the best Men, are most likely to excite *Laughter*. But this is truly leaping from p. 706, the Stage to the *Tumbrill* again, reducing all 717. *Wit* to the *Original Dung-Cart*. More might be cited to this purpose, but that may serve for an other Occasion: In the mean time I shall go on to *Beaumont and Fletcher*.

Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess is remarkably Moral, and a sort of Exhortation to Chastity. This Play met with ill Judges; 'twas His'd before half Acted, and seems to have suffer'd on the Account of it's Innocence. Soon after, *Ben Johnson* and *Beaumont* appear, and justify the Author Beau-
mont's &c.
Works. in a Copy of Verses. And as *Beaumont*

Ibid.

commends Modeſty in *Fletcher*, ſo he is commended himſelf by Mr. *Earl* for the ſame Quality.

*Such Paſſions, ſuch Expreſſions meet my Eye,
Such Wit untainted with Obſcenity.*

Ibid.

And as I remember *Jaspar Main* has ſome ſtroaks to the ſame purpoſe. *Fletcher* is ſtill more full for the Cauſe. Indeed nothing can be more expreſs. He delivers himſelf by way of Prologue; where the Poet ſpeaks in his own Perſon. The Prologue to the *Woman-Hater*, very frankly lets the Audience know what they are to expect. *If there be any amongſt you (ſays he) that come to hear Laſcivious Scenes, let them depart; For I do pronounce this, to the utter diſcomfort of all Two-penny Gallery Men, you ſhall hear no Bawdry in it.* We find in thoſe days Smut was the expectation of a Coarſe Palate, and reliſh'd by none but Two-penny Customers. In the *Knight of the Burning Peſtle*, part of the Prologue runs thus. *They were baniſh'd the Theatre at Athens, and from Rome baniſh'd, that brought Parasites on the Stage with Apish Actions, or Fools with uncivil Habits, or Courtizans with immodeſt Words.* Afterwards Prologue, who represents a Perſon, gives us more to the ſame purpoſe.

— Fly

*Fly far from hence,
All private Taxes, immodest Phrases,
Whatever may but look like Vicious.
For wicked Mirth never true Pleasure brings,
For honest Minds are pleas'd with honest things.*

I have quoted nothing but Comedy in
this Author. The Coronation is another;
And the Prologue tells you there is

*No Undermirth, such as does lard the Scene,
For coarse Delight, the Language here is clean.
And Confident our Poet bad me say,
He'll bate you but the Folly of a Play.
For which, altho' dull Souls his Pen despise,
Who think it yet too early to be wise.
The Nobles yet will thank his Muse, at least
Excuse him, 'cause his Thought aim'd at the
best.*

Thus these Poets are in their Judgments
clearly ours. 'Tis true, their Hand was
not always steady. But thus much may
be averr'd, that Fletcher's latter Plays are
the most inoffensive. This is either a sign
of the Poet's Reformation; or that the ex-
ceptionable Passages belong'd to Beaumont,
who died first.

To these Authorities of our own Nati-
on, I shall add a considerable Testimony

Theodore.
Ed. Roven.
Ep. Ded.

out of Mr. *Corneille*. This Author was sensible that though the Expression of his *Theodore* was altogether unsmutty, Yet the bare Idea of Prostitution uneffected, shock'd the Audience, and made the Play miscarry. The Poet protests he took great care to alter the Natural Complexion of the Image, and to convey it decently to the Fancy; and deliver'd only some part of the History as inoffensively as possible. And after all his Screening and Conduct, the Modesty of the Audience would not endure that little, the Subject forced him upon. He is positive, The Comedies *St. Augustine* declaim'd against, were not such as the *French*. For theirs are not Spectacles of Turpitude, as that Father justly calls those of his Time. The *French* generally speaking, containing nothing but Examples of Innocence, Piety and Virtue.

In this Citation we have the Opinion of the Poet, the Practice of the *French Theatre*, and the Sense of that Nation, and all very full to our purpose.

To conclude this Chapter. By what has been offer'd, it appears, that the present *English Stage* is superlatively Scandalous. It exceeds the Liberties of all Times and Countries. It has not so much as the poor Plea of a *Precedent*, to which most other ill Things

Things may claim a pretence. 'Tis mostly
meer Discovery and Invention: A new
World of *Vice* found out, and planted with
all the Industry imaginable. *Aristophanes*
himself, how bad soever in other respects,
does not amplify and flourish, and run
through all the Topicks of Lewdness like
these Men. The *Miscellany Poems* are like-
wise horribly Licentious. They are some-
times Collections from Antiquity, and of-
ten the worst Parts of the worst Poets. And
to mend the Matter, the *Christian Transla-
tion* is more nauseous than the *Pagan Ori-
ginal*: Such Stuff I believe was never seen,
and suffer'd before. In a word, If Pover-
ty and Diseases, the Dishonour of Families,
and the Debauching of Kingdoms, are such
valuable Advantages, then I confess these
Books deserve Encouragement: But if the
Case is otherwise, I humbly conceive the
Proceeding should be so too.

C H A P. II.

The Profaneness of the Stage.

ANother Instance of the Disorders of the Stage, is their Profaneness; This Charge may come under these two Particulars.

1st. *Their Cursing and Swearing.*

2dly. *Their Abuse of Religion, and Holy Scripture.*

1st. *Their Cursing and Swearing.*

What is more frequent than their Wishes of Hell and Confusion, Devils and Diseases, all the Plagues of this World, and the next, to each other? And as for Swearing; 'tis used by all Persons, and upon all Occasions: By Heroes, and Paltrons; by Gentlemen, and Clowns; Love, and Quarrels; Success, and Disappointment; Temper, and Passion, must be varnish'd, and set off with *Oaths*. At some times, and with some Poets, Swearing is no ordinary Relief. It stands up in the room of Sense, gives Spirit to a flat Expression, and makes a Period Musical and Round. In short, 'tis almost all the Rhetorick,

rick, and Reason some People are Masters of: The manner of performance is different. Sometimes they mimic the Matter; change the Letter, and keep the Sense, as if they had a mind to steal a Swearing, and break the Commandment without Sin. At another time, the Oaths are clipt, but not so much within the Ring, but that the Image and Supercription are visible. These Expedients I conceive are more for Variety, than Conscience: For when the Fit comes on them, they make no difficulty of Swearing at length. Instances of all these kinds may be met with in the *Old Batchelour*, *Double Dealer*, and *Love for Love*. And to mention no more, *Don Quixot*, the *Provok'd Wife*, and the *Relapse*, are particularly Rampant and Scandalous. The *English-Stage* exceed their Predecessors in this, as well as other Branches of Immorality. *Shakespeare* is comparatively sober, *Ben Jonson* is still more regular; And as for *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, in their Plays, they are commonly Profligate Persons that Swear, and even those are reprov'd for't. Besides, the Oaths are not so full of Hell and Defiance, as in the Moderns.

So much for Matter of Fact: And as for point of Law, I hope there needs not many Words to prove Swearing a Sin: For what

what is more provoking than Contempt, and what Sin more contemptuous than common Swearing? What can be more Insolent and Irreligious, than to bring in God to attest our Trifles, to give Security for our Follies, and to make part of our Diversi-
on? To play with Majesty and Omnipotence in this manner, is to render it cheap and despicable. How can such Customs as these consist with the Belief of Providence or Revelation? The Poets are of all People most to blame. They want even the Plea of *Bullies* and *Sharpers*. There's no Rencounters, no starts of Passion, no sudden Accidents to discompose them. They swear in Solitude and cool Blood, under Thought and Deliberation, for Business and for Exercise: This is a terrible Circumstance; It makes all *Malice Prepenſe*, and enflames the Guilt, and the Reckoning.

And if Religion signifies nothing (as I am afraid it does with some People) there is Law as well as Gospel, against Swearing. 3 *Jac. 1. cap. 21.* is expressly against the *Play-House*. It runs thus.

FOR the preventing and avoiding of the great abuse of the holy Name of God in Stage-Plays, Enterludes, &c. Be it enacted by our Sovereign Lord, &c. That if at any time, or times, after the End of this present Session of Parliament,

ment, any Person or Persons do, or shall, in any Stage-Play, Interlude, Shew, &c. Irreverently or Profanely, speak or use the Holy Name of God, or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghost, or of the Trinity, which are not to be spoken, but with Fear and Reverence; shall forfeit for every such Offence, by him or them committed Ten Pound: The one Moiety thereof to the King's Majesty, his Heirs, and Successors; the other Moiety thereof to him, or them, that will sue for the same in any Court of Record at Westminster, wherein no Essoin, Protection, or Wager of Law shall be allow'd.

By this *Act* not only direct Swearing, but all vain Invocation of the Name of God is forbidden. This *Statute* well executed would mend the *Poets*, or sweep the *Box*: And the *Stage* must either reform, or not thrive upon Profaneness.

3^{ly}. Swearing in the *Play-House* is an ungentlemanly, as well as an unchristian Practice. The *Ladies* make a considerable part of the *Audience*. Now Swearing before Women is reckon'd a Breach of good Behaviour; and therefore a civil Atheist will forbear it. The Custom seems to go upon this Presumption; that the Impressions of Religion are strongest in Wo-

Women, and more generally spread. And that it must be very disagreeable to them, to hear the Majesty of God treated with so little respect. Besides, Oaths are a boisterous and tempestuous sort of Conversation; generally the effects of Passion, and spoken with Noise, and Heat. Swearing looks like the beginning of a Quarrel, to which Women have an aversion; as being neither armed by Nature, nor disciplin'd by Custom for such rough Disputes. A Woman will start at a Soldier's Oath, almost as much as at the Report of his Pistol: And therefore a well-Bred Man will no more Swear than Fight in the Company of Ladies.

A Second Branch of the Profaneness of the Stage is their Abuse of Religion, and Holy Scripture. And here sometimes they don't stop short of Blasphemy. To cite all that might be Collected of this kind would be tedious. I shall give the Reader enough to justify the Charge, and I hope to abhor the Practice.

To begin with the *Mock-Astrologer*. In the First Act, the Scene is a Chappel, and that the Use of such Consecrated places may be the better understood, the time is taken up in Courtship, Raillery, and Ridiculing Devotion. *Jacinta* takes her turn among the rest. She interrupts *Theodosia*, and cries out: *Why Sister, Sister---will you pray?*

pray? What injury have I ever done you that you shou'd pray in my Company? Wildblood swears by Mahomet, rallies Insultingly upon the other World, and gives the preference to the Turkish Paradise. This Gentleman ^{p. 31.} to encourage *Jacinta* to a Compliance in Debauchery, tells her, *Heaven is all Eyes* ^{p. 37.} and no Tongue. That is, it sees Wickedness but conceals it. He Courts much at the same rate a little before. *When a Man* ^{p. 34.} comes to a great Lady, he is fain to approach her with Fear, and Reverence; methinks there's something of Godliness in't. Here you have the Scripture burlesqu'd, and the Pulpit-Admonition apply'd to Whoring. Afterwards *Jacinta* out of her great Breeding and Christianity, swears by *Alla*, and *Mahomet*, and makes a Jest upon Hell. *Wild-* ^{p. 34, 36.} blood tells his Man that *such undesigning Rogues as he, make a Drudge of poor Providence.* And *Maskall*, to shew his proficiency under his Masters, replies to *Bellamy*, who would have had him told a Lie, Sir, upon the Faith of a Sinner, you have had my ^{p. 55.} last Lie already. I have not one more to do me Credit, as I hope to be saved, Sir.

In the close of the Play, they make sport with Apparitions and Fiends. One of the Devils sneezes; upon this they give him the Blessing of the Occasion, and conclude he has got cold by being too long out of the Fire. ^{p. 59.}

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The Orphan lays the Scene in Christendom, and takes the same care of Religion. Castalio Complements his Mistress to Adoration.

Orph. p. 30.

No Tongue my Pleasure and my Pain can tell:
'Tis Heaven to have thee, and without thee Hell.

Polydor, when upon the attempt to debauch Montimia, puts up this Ejaculation.

p. 31.

Blessed Heaven, assist me but in this dear Hour.

Lactan.

Thus the Stage worships the true God in Blasphemy, as the Lindians did Hercules by Curling and throwing Stones. This Polydor has another Flight of Profaneness, but that has got a certain Protection, and therefore must not be disturb'd.

p. 19.

In the Old Batchelour, Vain-love asks Belmour, Could you be content to go to Heaven?

Bell. Hum, Not immediately in my Conscience, not heartily. — This is playing I take it with Edge-Tools. To go to Heaven in jest, is the way to go to Hell in earnest. In the Fourth Act, Lewdness is represented with that Gairty, as if the Crime was purely imaginary, and lay only in ignorance and preciseness. Have you thoroughly consider'd (says Fondlewife) how detestable, how heinous, and how crying a Sin the Sin of Adul-

Adultery is? Have you weigh'd I say? For
it is a very weighty Sin: And altho' it may
lie — yet thy Husband must also bear his^{p. 28.}
part; For thy Iniquity will fall on his Head.
I suppose this fit of Buffoonry and Profane-
ness, was to settle the Conscience of young
Beginners, and to make the Terrors of
Religion insignificant. *Belmour* desires *Le-
titia* to give him leave to swear by her Eyes
and her Lips: He Kisses the Strumpet, and
tells her, *Eternity was in that Moment.* *Le-
titia* is horribly Profane in her Apology to^{p. 31.}
her Husband; but having the Stage-Pro-
tection of Smut for her Guard, we must
let her alone. *Fondlewife* stalks under the^{p. 38.}
same shelter, and abuses a plain Text of
Scripture to an impudent Meaning. A
little before, *Letitia* when her Intriguer^{p. 39.}
with *Belmour* was almost discover'd, sup-
ports her self with this Consideration. All
my comfort lies in his Impudence, and Hea-
ven be prais'd he has a considerable Portion.
This is the Play-House Grace, and thus^{p. 39.}
Lewdness is made a part of Devotion!
There's another Instance still behind: 'Tis
that of *Sharpen* to *Vain-Love*, and lies
thus: — — — — —
and I have been a kind of Godfather to you,^{id. 49.}
yonder: I have promis'd and wou'd something
in your Name, which I think you are bound
to perform. For Christians to droll upon
their

their Baptism is somewhat extraordinary ; But since the Bible can't escape, 'tis the less wonder to make bold with the *Catechism*.

Double Dealer. p.
34.

p. 36.

p. 55.

p. 40.

In the *Double Dealer*, Lady Phant cries out *Jesu*, and talks Smut in the same Sentence. Sir *Paul Phant*, whom the Poet dubb'd a Fool when he made him a Knight, talks very Piously ! *Blessed be Providence, a poor unworthy Sinner, I am mightily beholden to Providence* : And the same Word is thrice repeated upon an odd Occasion. The meaning must be, that *Providence* is a ridiculous Supposition, and that none but Block-heads pretend to Religion. But the Poet can discover himself farther if need be. Lady *Froth* is pleas'd to call *Jehu* a *Hackney-Coach-man*. Upon this, *Brisk* replies, *If Jehu was a Hackney-Coach-man, I am answer'd, — you may put that into the Marginal Notes though, to prevent Criticisms — only mark it with a small Asterism and say, — Jehu was formerly a Hackney-Coach-man*. This for a heavy Piece of Profaneness, is no doubt thought a lucky one, because it Burlesques the Text, and the Comment, all under one. I could go on with the *Double Dealer*, but he'll come in my way afterwards, and so I shall part with him at present. Let us now take a view of *Don Sebastian*. And here the

the Reader can't be long unfurnish'd. *Dorax* shall speak first.

Shall I trust Heaven——

With my Revenge? then where's my Satisfaction?

No, it must be my own, I scorn a Proxy.

Sebast. p. 9.

But *Dorax* was a Renegado, what then? He had renounc'd Christianity, but not Providence. Besides, such hideous Sentences ought not to be put in the Mouth of the Devil. For that which is not fit to be heard, is not fit to be spoken. But to some People an Atheistical Rant is as good as a Flourish of Trumpets. To proceed; *Antonio* tho' a profess'd Christian, mends the matter very little. He is looking on a Lot which he had drawn for his Life: This proving unlucky, after the preamble of a Curse or two, he calls it,

As black as Hell; another lucky saying!

I think the Devil's in me:——good again,

Id. p. 10.

I cannot speak one Syllable but tends

To Death or to Damnation.

Thus the Poet prepares his Bullies for the other World! Hell and Damnation are strange entertaining Words upon the Stage! Were it otherwise, the Sense in

these Lines, would be almost as bad as the Conscience. The Poem warms and rises in the working; and the next Flight is extremely remarkable.

2. 47. *Not the Last Sounding could surprize me more,
That summons drowsy Mortals to their Doom,
When call'd in hast they fumble for their
Limbs.*

Id p. 83.
Exod. xiii.
4.

Very Solemnly and Religiously express'd! *Lucian* and *Celsus* could not have ridiculed the Resurrection better! Certainly the Poet never expects to be there. Such a light Turn would have agreed much better to a Man who was in the Dark, and was feeling for his Stockings. But let those who talk of *Fumbling* for their Limbs, take care they don't find them too fast. In the fourth Act, *Mustapha* dates his *Exaltation to Tumult*, from the second Night of the Month *Abib*. Thus you have the Holy Text abused by Captain *Tom*; and the Bible torn by the Rabble! The Design of this Liberty I can't understand, unless it be to make *Mustapha* as considerable as *Moses*; and the prevalence of a Tumult, as much a Miracle as the Deliverance out of *Egypt*. We have heard this Author hitherto in his *Characters*, let us hear him now in his own person. In his *Dedication* of *Aurence Zebe* he is so hardy

as

as to affirm, That *he who is too lightly reconciled after high Provocation, may Recommend himself to the World for a Christian, but I should hardly trust him for a Friend.* And why is a Christian not fit to make a Friend of? Are the Principles of Christianity defective, and the Laws of it ill contriv'd? Are the Interests and Capacities of Mankind over-look'd? Did our Great Master bind us to Disadvantage, and make our Duty our Misfortune? And did he grudge us all the Pleasures and Securities of Friendship? Are not all these horrid Suppositions? Are they not a flat Contradiction to the Bible, and a Satyr on the Attributes of the Deity? Our Saviour tells us, we must *forgive until Seventy times Seven*; That is, we must never be tired out of Clemency and Good Nature. He has taught us to pray for the Forgiveness of our own Sins, only upon the Condition of Forgiving others. Here is no exception upon the Repetition of the Fault, or the Quality of the Provocation. Mr. Dryden, to do him right, does not dispute the Precept. He confesses this is the way to be a Christian; but for all that, he *should hardly trust him for a Friend.* And why *ibid.* so? Because the Italian Proverb says, *He that forgives the second time is a Fool.* This Lewd Proverb comes in for Authority,

and is a piece of very Pertinent Blasphemy! Thus, in some Peoples *Logick*, one Proof from Atheism, is worth ten from the *New Testament*. But here the Poet argues no better than he believes. For most certainly, a Christian of all others is best qualified for Friendship: For he that loves his Neighbour as himself, and carries Benevolence and Good Nature beyond the Heights of Philosophy: He that is not govern'd by Vanity, or Design: He that prefers his Conscience to his Life, and has Courage to maintain his Reason: He that is thus qualified, must be a good Friend: And he that falls short, is no good Christian. And since the Poet is pleas'd to find fault with Christianity, let us examine his own Scheme. *Our Minds* (says he) *are perpetually wrought on by the Temperament of our Bodies, which makes me suspect they are nearer Allied than either our Philosophers, or School-Divines will allow them to be.* The meaning is, he suspects our Souls are nothing but Organiz'd Matter: Or, in plain English, our *Souls* are nothing but our Bodies; and then when the Body dies, you may guess what becomes of them! Thus the Authorities of Religion are weaken'd, and the Prospect of the other World almost shut up. And is this a likely Supposition for Sincerity and good Nature?

Does

Ibid.

Does Honour use to rise upon the Ruins of Conscience ? And are People the best Friends where they have the least Reason to be so ? But not only the Inclinations to Friendship must Languish upon this Scheme, but the very Powers of it are as it were destroy'd. By this Systeme, no Man can say his Soul is his own. He can't be assured the same Colours of Reason and Desire will last. Any little Accident from *without*, may metamorphose his Fancy, and push him upon a new Set of Thoughts; *Matter* and *Motion* are the most Humorsome Capricious Things in Nature; and withal, the most Arbitrary and uncontroll'd. And can Constancy proceed from Chance, Choice from Fate, and Virtue from Necessity ? In short, a Man at this rate, must be a Friend or an Enemy in spight of his Teeth, and just as long as the *Atoms* please, and no longer : Every Change in *Figure* and *Impulse*, must alter the Idea, and wear off the former Impression. So that by these Principles, Friendship will depend on the *Seasons*, and we must look in the *Weather Glass* for our Inclinations. But this 'tis to Refine upon Revelation, and grow wiser than Wisdom ! The same Author in his Dedication of *Juvenal* and *Persius*, has these Words :
My Lord, I am come to the last Petition of Ded. p. 51.

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Abraham; *If there be ten Righteous Lines in this vast Preface, spare it for their sake; and also spare the next City, because it is but a little one.* Here the Poet stands for Abraham, and the Patron for God Almighty: And where lies the Wit of all this? In the Decency of the Comparison? I doubt not. And for the *next City* he would have spared, he is out in the Allusion. 'Tis no *Zoar*, but much rather *Sodom and Gomorrah*; Let them take care the Fire and Brimstone does not follow: And that those who are so bold with Abraham's Petition, are not forced to that of *Dives*. To beg Protection for a Lewd Book in *Scripture-Phrase*, is very extraordinary! 'Tis in effect to prostitute the Holy Rhetorick, and send the Bible to the Brothel! I can hardly imagine why these Tombs of Antiquity were raked in, and disturb'd! Unless it were to conjure up a departed Vice, and revive the Pagan Impurities; unless it were to raise the Stench of the Vault, and Poison the Living with the Dead. Indeed *Juvenal* has a very untoward way with him in some of his Satyrs. His Pen has such a Libertine stroak, that 'tis a Question whether the Practice, or the Reproof, the Age, or the Author, were the more Licentious. He teaches those Vices he would correct

*Heathen
Literature.*

Juvenal.

correct, and writes more like a Pimp than a *Poet*. And truly I think there is but little of Lewdness lost in the *Translation*. The Sixth and Eleventh *Satyrs* are Particularly remarkable. Such nauseous Stuff is almost enough to debauch the *Alphabet*, and make the Language scandalous. One would almost be sorry for the Privilege of *Speech*, and the Invention of *Letters*, to see them thus wretchedly abused. And since the Business must be undertaken, why was not the Thought Blanched, the Expression made remote, and the ill Features cast into Shadows? I'm mistaken if we have not Lewdness enough of our own Growth, without Importing from our Neighbours. No, this can't be. An Author must have Right done him, and be shewn in his own Shape, and Complexion. Yes by all means! Vice must be disrobed, and People poison'd, and all for the sake of Justice! To do Right to such an Author is to burn him. I hope Modesty is much better than Resemblance. The Imitation of an ill Thing is the worse for being exact: And sometimes to report a Fault is to repeat it.

To return to his *Plays*. In *Love Triumphant*, Garcia makes *Veramond* this Compliment:

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Lev. Tri. *May Heaven and your brave Son, and a-*
 amph. p. 3. *bove all,*

Your own prevailing Genius guard your Age.

What is meant by his Genius, in this place, is not easy to Discover, only that 'tis something which is a better Guard than Heaven. But 'tis no Matter for the Sense, as long as the Profaneness is clear. In this *Act*, Colonel *Sancho* lets *Carlos* know the old Jew is dead, which he calls good news.

Carl. What Jew?

Sanch. Why the rich Jew my Father, he
 Id. p. 11. *is gone to the Bosom of Abraham his Father,*
and I his Christian Son am left sole Heir.

A very mannerly Story! But why does the Poet acquaint us with *Sancho's* Religion? The case is pretty plain: 'Tis to give a lustre to his Profaneness, and make him

Id. p. 11. *burlesque St. Luke with the better Grace.*

Alphonso complains to *Victoria* that *Nature* dotes with *Age*. His reason is, because Brother and Sister can't Marry as they did at first: 'Tis very well! We know what *Nature* means in the Language of Christianity, and especially under the Notion of a Law-giver. *Alphonso* goes on, and compares the Possession of Incestuous Love to Heaven. Yes, 'tis *Eternity in*
 Id. p. 34. *Little.*

There is a high allusion to Abraham's bosom. It is Richard the 3^d. A. S.

And to Lazarus in Hen. 4th. P. 1. Act 4. S.

to Abimelech's dream & his eating grass in the bundle of Abraham ch. 2. S.

It seems Lovers must be distracted, or there's no diversion. A Flight of Madness like a Faulcons Lessening, makes them the more gaz'd at ! I am now coming to some of the Poet's Divinity. And here *Vengeance is said to be so sweet a Morsel,*

That Heaven reserves it for it's proper Taste. p. 58.

This belike is the meaning of those Texts. *that God is good and gracious, and slow to anger, and does not willingly afflict the Children of Men!* From expounding the Bible, he goes to the *Common-Prayer*. And as Carlos interprets the Office of Matrimony, *For Better for Worse, is for Virgin for Whore*; p. 62. And that the Reference might not be mistaken, the Poet is careful to put the Words in *Italick*, and great Letters. And by the way, He falls under the Penalty of the Statute for Depraving the *Common-Prayer*. 1st. Eliz. cap. 2.

Sancho upon reading a Letter which he did not like, cries, *Damn it, it must be all Orthodox. Damn and Orthodox clapt together*, make a lively Rant, because it looks like Cursing the Creed. The most extraordinary Passage is behind ; Sancho was unhappily Married: Carlos tells him, *For your Comfort, Marriage they say is Holy*. Sancho replies : *Ay, and so is Martyrdom, as they say, but both of them are good for just nothing* p. 63. p. 72.

*Love for
Love. p. 49.*

p. 26.

p. 27

thing, but to make an end of a Man's Life.
 I shall make no Reflections upon This :
 There needs no Reading upon a Monster :
 'Tis shewn enough by it's own Deformity,
Love for Love has a strain like this, and
 therefore I shall put them together : *Scandal*
sollicits Mrs. Foresight : She threatens to
 tell her Husband. He replies, *He will die a*
Martyr rather than disclaim his Passion. Here
 we have Adultery dignified with the style
 of Martyrdom : As if 'twas as Honourable
 to perish in Defence of Whoring, as to die
 for the Faith of Christianity. But these
Martyrs will be a great while in burning,
 and therefore let no body strive to grace
 the Adventure, or encrease the Number.
 And now I am in this *Play*, the Reader shall
 have more. *Jeremy* who was bred at the
 University, calls the Natural Inclinations
 to Eating and Drinking, *Whoreson Appetites*.
This is strange Language ! The
Manicheans, who made Creation the work
 of the Devil, could scarcely have been thus
 Coarse. But the Poet was *Jeremy's* Tutor,
 and so that Mystery is at an end. *Sr.*
Sampson carries on the Expostulation, rails
 at the Structure of Humane Bodies, and
 says, *Nature has been Provident only to*
Bears, and Spiders ; This is the Author's
 Paraphrase on the 139 *Psalms* ; and thus
 he gives God thanks for the Advantage
 of

of his Being ! The Play advances from one Wickedness to another, from the Works of God to the Abuse of his Word. Foresight confesses 'tis Natural for Men to mistake. Scandal replies, You say true, Man will err, meer Man well err—but you are something more—There have been wise Men ; but they were such as you—Men who consulted the Stars, and were observers of Omens—Solomon was wise, but how ? — by his Judgment in Astrology. 'Tis very well ! Solomon and Foresight had their Understandings qualified alike. And pray what was Foresight ? Why an Illiterate Fellow. A pretender to Dreams, Astrology, Palmestry, &c. This is the Poet's Account of Solomon's Supernatural Knowledge ! Thus the wisest Prince is dwindled into a Gypsie ! And the Glorious Miracle resolved into Dotage, and Figure-flogging ! Scandal continues his Banter, and says, the wise Men of the East owed their Instruction to a Star ; which is rightly observ'd by Gregory the Great in favour of Astrology. This was the Star which shone at our Saviour's Birth. Now who could imagine by the Levity of the Occasion, that the Author thought it any better than an Ignis Fatuus, or Sydrophel's Kite in *Huilibras* ? Sir Sampson and the fine Angelica, after some lewd Raillery continue the Allegory, and drive

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drive it up into Profaneness. For this reason the Citation must be imperfect.

Sir Sampf. Sampson's a very good Name, for---your Sampsons were strong Dogs from the beginning.

p. 80.

Angel. Have a care--- If you remember the strongest Sampson of your Name, pull'd an old House over his Head at last. Here you have the Sacred History Burlesqu'd, and Sampson once more brought into the House of Dagon, to make sport for the Philistines! To draw towards an end of this Play. Tattle would have carried off Valentine's Mistress. This latter, expresses his Resentment in a most Divine manner!

p. 91.

Tattle, I thank you, you would have interpos'd between me and Heaven, but Providence has laid Purgatory in your Way. Thus Heaven is debas'd into an Amour, and Providence brought in to direct the Paultry concerns of the Stage! Angelica concludes much in the same strain. Men are

p. 92.

generally Hypocrites and Infidels, they pretend to Worship, but have neither Zeal, nor Faith; How few like Valentine would persevere unto Martyrdom? &c. Here you have the Language of the Scriptures, and the most solemn Instances of Religion, prostituted to Courtship and Romance! Here you have a Mistress made God Almighty, Ador'd with Zeal and Faith, and

of the STAGE.

and Worship'd up to Martyrdom! This if 'twere only for the Modesty, is strange stuff for a Lady to say of her self. And had it not been for the Profane Allusion, would have been cold enough in all Conscience.

8. 77
*John's Venice
 Preser's d's
 and some of
 it d's
 songs.*

The *Provok'd Wife* furnishes the Audience with a Drunken Atheistical Catch: 'Tis true, this Song is afterwards said to be *Fall of Sin and Impudence*. But why then was it made? This Confession is a miserable *Salvo*; and the Antidote is much weaker than the Poyson: 'Tis just as if a Man should set a House in a Flame, and think to make amends by crying *Fire* in the Streets. In the last *Act*, *Rasor* makes his Discovery of the Plot against *Belinda* in Scripture-Phrase. I'll give it the Reader in the Author's Dialogue.

Prov. Wife
 p. 38.

Belind. I must know who put you upon all this *Mischief*. id. p. 77.

Rasor. Sathan and his Equipage: Woman tempted me, Lust weaken'd, — And so the Devil overcame me: As fell Adam so fell I.

Belind. Then pray, Mr. Adam Will you make us acquainted with your Eve?

Rasor unmasks } This is the Woman
Mademoiselle, and } that tempted me: But
 says, } this is the Serpent
 (meaning Lady Fanciful)
 that

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that tempted the Woman; and if my Prayers might be heard, her punishment for so doing, should be like the Serpents of old, &c. This Rasor in what we hear of him before, is all Roguery, and Debauch: But now he enters in Sackcloth, and talks like Tribulation in the Alchymist. His Character is chang'd to make him the more Profane; And his Habit, as well as Discourse, is a Jest upon Religion. I am forced to omit one Line of his Confession. The Design of it is to make the Bible deliver an obscene Thought: And because the Text would not bend into a Lewd Application, he alters the Words for this purpose, but passes it for Scripture still. This sort of Entertainment is frequent in the Relapse. Lord Foplington laughs at the Publick Solemnities of Religion, as if 'twas a ridiculous piece of Ignorance, to pretend to the Worship of a God. He Discourses with Berinthia, and Amanda in this manner: *Why Faith Madam, ----- Sunday is a wile Day, I must confess. A Man must have very little to do at Church that can give an account of the Sermon. And a little after: To Mind the Prayers or the Sermon is to mind what one should not do. Lory tells young Fashion. I have been in a lamentable Fright ever since that Conscience had the Impudence to intrude into your Company.*
His

Relapse, p.
32, 33.

His Master makes him this comfortable Answer. *Be at peace, it will come no more: — I have kic'd it down Stairs.* A little before he breaks out into this Rapture. *Now Conscience I defy thee!* By the way, p. 44. 45. we may observe, that this young Fashion is the Poet's Favourite. *Berinthia and Worthy*, two Characters of Figure, determine the Point thus, in defence of Pimping. Vid. Infra.

Berinth. Well, I would be glad to have no Bodies Sins to answer for but my own. But p. 51. where there is a necessity —

Worth. Right as you say, where there is a Necessity, a Christian is bound to help his Neighbour.

Nurse, after a great deal of profane Stuff, concludes her Expostulation in these words: *But his Worship (Young Fashion) over-flows with his Mercy and his Bounty; He is not only pleas'd to forgive us our Sins. — but which* John 1. 8. *is more than all, has prevail'd with me to be-* p. 96, 97. *come the Wife of thy Bosom: This is very heavy, and ill-dress'd; And an Atheist must be sharp set to relish it. The Virtuous Amanda makes no scruple to charge the Bible with untruths.*

— What Slippery stuff are Men compos'd of? Sure the Account of their Creation's false, And 'twas the Woman's Rib that they were form'd of.

Ibid.

Thus

Thus

The Profaneness

Thus this Lady abuses her self, together with the Scripture, and shews her Sense, and her Religion, to be much of a Size.

p. 91.

Berinthia, after she has given in a Scheme for the debauching *Amanda*, is thus accosted by *Worthy*: *Thou Angel of Light, let me fall down and adore thee!* A most Seraphick Compliment to a Procurefs! And 'tis possible some Angel or other may thank him for't in due time.

I am quite tired with these wretched Sentences. The Sight indeed is horrible, and I am almost unwilling to shew it. However they shall be Produced like Malefactors, not for Pomp, but Execution. Snakes and Vipers, must sometimes be look'd on, to destroy them. I can't forbear expressing my self with some Warmth under these Provocations. What Christian can be unconcern'd at such intolerable Abuses? What can be a juster Reason for Indignation than Insolence and Atheism? Resentment can never be better shewn, nor Aversion more seasonably exerted! Nature made the Ferment and Rising of the Blood, for such occasions as This. On what unhappy Times are we fallen! The Oracles of Truth, the Laws of Omnipotence, and the Fate of Eternity are Laught at and despis'd! That the Poets should

should be suffer'd to play upon the Bible, and Christianity be Hooted off the Stage! Christianity that from such feeble beginnings made so stupendous a progress! That over-bore all the Oppositions of Power, and Learning; and with Twelve poor Men, outstretch'd the Roman Empire. That this glorious Religion so reasonable in it's Doctrine, so well attested by Miracles, by Martyrs, by all the Evidence that Fact is capable of, should become the Diversion of the Town, and the Scorn of Buffoons! And where, and by whom is all this Out-rage committed? Why not by *Julian*, or *Porphirie*, not among Turks or Heathens, but in a Christian Country, in a Reform'd Church, and in the Face of Authority! Well! I perceive the Devil was a Saint in his Oracles, to what he is in his Plays. His Blasphemies are as much improv'd as his Style, and one would think the Muse was Legion! I suppose the Reader may be satisfied already: But if he desires farther proof, there's something more flamingly impious behind. +

The Christian *Almeida* when *Sebastian* was in danger, Raves and Foams like one Possess'd,

But is there Heaven? for I begin to doubt: Don Se-
Now take your swing ye impious Sin unpunish'd, *bastian, p.*
51.

G

Eter-

+ In the Mountaineers Christianity is represented as consisting in drinking wine. "I have got two full flaggons of X^o in me".

*Eternal Providence seems over-watch'd,
And with a slumbering Nod assents to Murder.*

In the next Page, the bellows again much after the same manner. The *Double Dealer* to lay the least of him, follows his Master in this Road; *Passibus aquis*. Sir Paul Plyant one would think had done his part; But the ridiculing of Providence won't satisfie all People: And therefore the next attempt is somewhat bolder.

Double Dealer, p. 19. p. 17.

Sir Paul. *Hold your self contented my Lady Plyant,--- I find Passion coming upon me by Inspiration. In Love Triumphant, Carlos is by the Constitution of the Play a Christian; and therefore must be construed in the Sense of his Religion. This Man blunders out this horrible Expression. Nature has given me my Portion in Sense with a P---- to her, &c.* The Reader may see the Hellish Syllable at Length if he pleases. This Curse is borrow'd for *Taung Fashion* in the *Relapse*. The *Double Dealer* is not yet exhausted. *Cynthia the Top Lady grows Thoughtful. Upon the question, she relates her Contemplation. Cynth. I am thinking (says she) that tho' Marriage makes Man and Wife one Flesh, it leaves them two Fools.* This Jest is made upon a Text in *Genesis*, and afterwards applied by our Saviour to the Case of Divorce

p. 44.

Double Dealer, p. 18.

Gen. 2. St. Math. 19.

voice. *Love for Love* will give us a farther Account of this Author's Proficiency in the *Scriptures*. Our Blessed Saviour affirms himself to be the *Way, the Truth, and the Light; that he came to bear Witness to the Truth, and that his Word is Truth*. These Expressions were remembred to good purpose. For *Valentine* in his pretended Madness tells *Backram* the Lawyer; *I am Truth, — I am Truth. —* *Love, &c.*
Who's that, that's out of his way, I am Truth, p. 59, 61.
and can set him right. Now a Poet that had not been smitten with the Pleasure of Blasphemy, would never have furnish'd Frensy with Inspiration; nor put our Saviour's Words in the Mouth of a Madman. *Lady Brute*, after some struggle between Conscience and Lewdness, declares in Favour of the later. She says, *the part* *provok'd*
of a downright Wife is to Cuckold her Hus- *Wife, p. 3.*
band. And tho' this is against the strict Statute-Law of Religion, yet if there were a Court of Chancery in Heaven, she should be sure to cast him.

This Brass is double Guilt. First, It supposes no Equity in Heaven. And Secondly, If there was, *Adultery* would not be punish'd! The Poet afterwards acquaints us by this Lady, that Blasphemy is no Woman's Sin. Why then does she fall into it? Why in the mid'st of Temper

p. 65.

and Reasoning? What make him break in upon his own Rules? Is Blasphemy never unseasonable upon the Stage, and does it always bring it's excuse along with it? The *Relapse* goes on in the same strain. When *Young Fashion* had a prospect of cheating his Elder Brother, he tells *Lory*,
Relapse, p. 19. *Providence thou seest at last takes care of Men of Merit.* *Berinthia*, who has engag'd to corrupt *Amanda* for *Worthy*, attacks her with this Speech, *Mr. Worthy used you like a Text, he took you all to pieces, and it seems, was particular in her Commendation.* Thus she runs on for several Lines, in a Lewd and Profane Allegory. In the Application, she speaks out the Design, and concludes with this Pious Exhortation! *Now consider what has been said, and Heaven give you Grace to put it in Practice; that is, to play the Whore.* There are few of these last Quotations, but what are plain Blasphemy, and within the Law. They look reeking as it were from Pandemonium, and almost smell of Fire and Brimstone. This is an Eruption of Hell with a Witness! I almost wonder the Smoak of it has not darken'd the Sun, and turn'd the Air to Plague and Poyson! These are outrageous Provocations; enough to arm all Nature in Revenge; To exhaust the Judgments of Heaven,
and

and sink the *Island* in the Sea! What a spite have these Men to the God that made them? How do they Rebel upon his Bounty, and attack him with his own Reason? These Giants in Wickedness, how would they ravage with a Stature Proportionable? They that can Swagger in Impotence, and Blaspheme upon a Mole-Hill, what would they do if they had Strength to their Good-Will? And what can be the Ground of this Confidence, and the Reason of such horrid Presumption? Why the *Scripture* will best satisfy the question, *Because Sentence against an Evil Work is not executed speedily, therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men, is fully set in them to do Evil.* Eccles. 8. 11.

Clemency is Weakness with some People: And the Goodness of God which should lead them to Repentance, does but harden them the more. They conclude he wants Power to punish, because he has Patience to forbear. Because there is a Space between Blasphemy, and Vengeance, and they don't perish in the Act of Defiance; Because they are not blasted with Lightning, transfixt with Thunder, and Guarded off with Devils, they think there's no such matter as a day of Reckoning. *But let no Man be deceiv'd, God is not mock'd; not without danger they may be assured. Let them retreat in time, before the Floods*

The Profaneness

run over them: Before they come to that place, where Madness will have no Mufick, nor Blasphemy any Diversion.

And here it may not be amifs to look a little into the Behaviour of the *Heathens*. Now 'tis no wonder to find them run Riot upon this Subject. The Characters of their Gods were not unblemish'd. Their Prospect of the other World, was but Dim; neither were they under the Terrors of *Revelation*. However, they are few of them fo Bad as the *Moderns*.

Eunuch.

Heauton.

A. 5. 1.

Adelp. A.

5. 7.

Terence does not run often upon this Rock. 'Tis true, *Cherea* falls into an ill Rapture after his Success. *Chremes* bids his Wife not tire the Gods with Thanks: And *Eschinas* is quite sick of the Religious part of the Wedding. These Instances, excepting his Swearing, are the most, (and I think near all the) exceptionable Passages of this *Author*.

Plautus is much more bold. But then his Sallies are generally made by *Slaves* and *Panders*.

This makes the Example less dangerous, and is some sort of Extenuation. I grant this imperfect Excuse won't serve him always. There are some Instances where his Persons of better Figure are guilty of Lewd Defences, Profane Flights, and Sawcy Expostulation. But the Ro-

Lyconides.

Aulular.

A. 2. 4. Pa-

lestra Rud.

A. 1. 3.

Debarchus.

Trucul.

A. 2. 4.

man.

man Deities were Beings of ill Fame,
 'tis the less wonder therefore if the Poets
 were familiar with them. However,
 Plautus has something good in him, and
 enough to condemn the Practice. Plesides
 would gladly have had the Gods change the
 method of Things, in some Particulars. He
 would have had frank good Humour'd People
 long liv'd, and close-fisted Knowers in Young.
 To this Periplectomenus Gravely answers,
 That 'tis great Ignorance, and Misbehaviour
 to Censure the Conduct of the Gods, or speak
 dishonourably of them. In his Pseudolus the
 Procurer Ballio talks Profanely. Upon
 which Pseudolus makes this Reflection.
 This Fellow makes nothing of Religion, how
 can we trust him in other matters? For the
 Gods whom all People have the greatest rea-
 son to fear, are most slighted by him.

The Greek Tragedians are more staunch,
 and write nearer the Scheme of Natural
 Religion. 'Tis true, they have some bold
 Expressions: But then they generally re-
 prove the Liberty, and punish the Men.
 Prometheus in Aeschylus blusters with a
 great deal of Noise and Stubbornness. He
 is not for changing Conditions with Mer-
 cury: And chuses rather to be miserable,
 than to submit even to Jupiters himself.
 The Chorus rebuke him for his Pride, and
 threaten him with greater Punishment.

Instances
 of
 Poison
 and
 Antidote

Mil. Glor.

101.9

Pseudolus

Act. 1. 3.

401

Prom. Act 3.

Vinc. 57.

And the Poet to make all sure, brings him
 to Execution before the end of the Play.
 He discharges Thunder and Lightning at
 his Head; shakes his Rock with an Earth-
 quake, turns the Air into Whirl-wind,
 and draws up all the Terroures of Nature
 to make him an Example. In his Expedi-
 tion against Thebes, *Eteocles* expects *Ca-*
paneus would be destroyed for his Blas-
 phemies; Which happen'd accordingly.
 On the other hand; *Amphiaraus* being a
 person of Virtue, and Pious, they are afraid
 lest he should succeed. For a Religious
 Enemy is almost invincible. *Darius's* Ghost
 lays *Xerxes's* ruin upon the excess of his
 Ambition. 'Twas, because he made a bridge
 over the Hellespont, us'd Neptune contuma-
 ciously; and thought himself Superior to Hea-
 ven. This Ghost tells the Chorus, that the
 Persian Army miscarried for the outrages
 they did to Religion, for breaking down the
 Altars, and plundering the Gods.
Ajax's Distraction is represented as ju-
 dicial in *Sophocles*. 'Twas inflicted for
 his Pride and Atheism. When his Fa-
 ther bid him be brave, but Religious
 withal, he haughtily replyed, that 'twas
 for Cowards to beg the Assistance of the
 Gods; as for his part, he hoped to Con-
 quer without them. And when *Mint-*
us encouraged him to charge the Enemy,
 , He

p. 92.

p. 101.

Hesiod. 161.

164.

Ajax. Fla-
 gell.

He made her this Lowd and insuffer-
 'ble Answer. Pray withdraw, and give
 'your Countenance elsewhere, I want no
 'Goddeſſes to help me do my Buſineſs:
 This Insolence made *Minerva* hate him;
 and was the cauſe of his Madneſs and
 ſelf Murther. To proceed. The *Chor-
 us* condemns the Liberty of *Joceſta*, who
 obliquely charged a Practice upon the *Ora-
 cle*: Tho' after all, ſhe did not tax *Apolla*,
 but his Miniſters.

The Office
 of the
 Oedip. Ty-chorus
 p. 187.

The ſame *Chorus* recommends Piety and
 Reliance upon the Gods, and threatens
 Pride and Irreligion with Deſtruction.
 In *Antigone*, *Ereſtus* adviſes *Creon* to wa-
 ve the Rigour of his *Edict*, and not let the
 Body of *Polynices* lie unburied, and ex-
 poſ'd. He tells him the Altars were al-
 ready polluted with Humane Fleſh. This
 had made the Language of the Birds in-
 intelligible, and confounded the Marks of
Augury. *Creon* replies in a rage, and ſays,
 he would not conſent to the Burial of
Polynices. No, tho, 'twere to prevent the
 Eagle's throwing part of the Carcaſs in
Jove's Chair of *Scam*. This was a bold
 Flight; but 'tis not long before he pays
 for't. Soon after, his Son, and Queen, kill
 them-

p. 188.

Antig.
 p. 256.

The Prometheus

themselves. And in the close, the Poet, who speaks in the *Chorus*, explains the Misfortune, and points upon the Cause, and affirms, that *Creon* was punish'd for his Haughtiness and Impiety. To go on to his *Trachiniae*. *Hercules* in all the extremity of his Torture does not fall foul upon Religion. 'Tis true, He shews as much Impatience as 'tis possible. His Person, his Pain, and the Occasion of it, were very extraordinary. These circumstances make it somewhat natural for him to complain above the common rate. The Greatness of his Spirit, the Fever of his Blood, and the Rage of his Passion, could hardly fail of putting Force, and Vehemence into his Expressions. Tho' to deal clearly, he seems better furnished with Rhetorick, than true Fortitude. But after all, his Disorders are not altogether ungovern'd. He is uneasy, but not impious and profane. I grant *Hercules* *Quem in Statera*, swaggers at a strange Rhodomontading rate. But the Conduct of this Author is very indifferent. He makes a meek *Salamander* of his *Hero*, and lets him declaim with too much of Length, Curiosity and Affectation, for one in his Condition. He harangues it with great plenty of Points, and Sentences in the Fire, and lies frying, and

Phi-

Philosophizing for near a Hundred Lines together. In fine, this Play is so judiciously manag'd, that *Hermes* is confidently written by neither of the *Seneca's*, but by some later Author of a lower Class. To return to *Sophocles's Trachinæ*, *Phyllis* reproaches the Gods with Neglect, because they gave *Hercules* no Assistance, and glances upon *Jupiter* himself. This sally is not so thoroughly corrected as formerly. 'Tis true, the *Chorus* make some little satisfaction immediately after. They resolve all surprizes of Misfortune, all Revolutions of States or Families, into the Will and Permission of *Jupiter*. This by implication, they make an Argument for acquiescence. Besides, the Poet had laid in a sort of Caution against Misconstruction before. For the *Messenger* tells *Dejanira*, that we ought not to Mourn at the Conduct of *Jupiter*.

Trach. p.
375.

Trach. p.
340.

— To the 5th Act of the Trachinæ

This for a Heav'n is something, tho' not enough. *Cleomenes's* Rage seems an imitation of *Philoctetes's* only 'tis bolder, and has nothing of the rashness of Youth to excuse it. Besides, *Sophocles* throws in somewhat by way of Preservative. Where

Cleom. p.
54.

as

The Profaneness

as in *Cleomenes*, the Boy *Cleonidas* has the better on the wrong side, and seems to carry the Cause of Atheism against his Father. This Scene of a Famine Mr. Dryden calls a Beauty; and yet methinks *Clora* is not very Charming! Her part is to tell you the Child suck'd to no purpose.

p. 54.

It pull'd, and pull'd but now, but nothing came;
At last it drew so hard that the Blood follow'd.
And that Red Milk I found upon it's Lips,
Which made me swoon for Fear.

There's a Description of Sucking for you! And truly one would think the Muse on't were scarcely wean'd. This Lady's Fancy is just Slip-Socking-high; and she seems to want Sense, more than her Breakfast. If this Passage would not shine, the Poet should have let it alone. 'Tis *Horace's* advice.

De Arte
Poet.

Et quæ
Desperes tractare nitescere posse relinque.

The greatest part of the Life of this Scene is spent in Impious Rants, and Atheistical Disputes. To do the Author right, his Characters never want Spirits for such Service, either Pull or Fastening. Some People love to say the worst Things in the best

best manner; to perfume their Poisons, and give an Air to Deformity.

There is one ill Sentence in *Sophocles* behind. *Philoctetes* calls the Gods *Rascal*, and Libels their Administration. This Officer we must understand was left upon a Solitary Island, ill used by his Friends, and Inarras'd with Poverty and Ulcers, for Ten Years together: These, under the Ignorance of Paganism, were trying Circumstances, and take off somewhat of the Malignity of the Complaint. Afterwards he seems to repent, and declares his Assurance that the Gods will do Justice, and prays frequently to them. The Conclusion of this Play is remarkably Moral. Here *Hercules* appears in *Machine*; acquaints *Philoctetes* with his own Glorious Condition: That his Happiness was the Reward of Virtue, and the Purchase of Merit. He charges him to pay a due regard to Religion; for Piety would recommend him to *Jupiter* more than any other Qualification. It went into the other World with People, and they found their Account in't both Living and Dead.

Upon the whole; the Plays of *Æschylus* and *Sophocles* are formed upon Models of Virtue: They joyn Innocence with Pleasure, and design the Improvement of the Audience.

In

The Profaneness

Act. 2.

p. 295.

Agam.
Act. 3.

In *Euripides's Baccha*, *Pentheus* is pull'd in pieces for using *Bacchus* with Disrespect. And the *Chorus* observes that God never fails to punish Impiety, and Contempt of Religion. *Polyphemus* blusters Atheistically, and pretends to be as great as *Jupiter*: But then his Eye is burnt out in the fifth Act. And the *Chorus* in *Heraclide* affirm it next to Madness not to Worship the Gods, I grant he has some profane Passages stand uncorrected, and what wonder is it to see a *Pagan* Miscarry? *Seneca*, as he was inferiour in Judgment to the *Greeks*, so he is more frequent, and uncautious, in his Flights of Extravagance. His Hero's and Heroines, are excessively bold with the Superiour Beings. They rave to Distraction, and he does not often call them to an account for't. 'Tis true, *Ajax Oileus* is made an Example for Blaspheming in a Storm; He is first struck with Thunder, and then carried to the Bottom: The Modern Poets proceed upon the Liberties of *Seneca*. Their Mad-men are very seldom reckon'd with. They are Profane without Censure, and defie the *Living God* with success. Nay, in some respect they exceed even *Seneca* himself. He flies out only under Impatience; and never falls into these Fits without Torture, and hard Usage. But the
English

+ In the Tempest.

English Stage are unprovok'd in their Irreligion, and Blasphemy for their Pleasure. But supposing the *Theatres of Rome*, and *Athens*, as bad as possible, what Defence is all this? Can we argue from *Heathenism* to *Christianity*? How can the *Practice* be the same, where the *Rule* is so very different? Have we not a clear Light to direct us, and greater Punishments to make us afraid? Is there no Distinction between Truth and Fiction, between Majesty and a Pageant? Must God be treated like an Idol, and the *Scriptures* banter'd like *Homer's Elysium*, and *Hesiod's Theogonia*? Are these the Returns we make him for his Supernatural Assistance? For the more perfect Discovery of himself, the stooping of his Greatness, and the Wonders of his Love? Can't we refuse the Happiness without affronting the Offer? Must we add Contempt to Disobedience, and Out-rage to Ingratitude? Is there no Diversion without Insulting the God that made us, the Goodness that would save us, and the Power that can damn us? Let us not flatter our selves, *Words* won't go for nothing. Profaneness is a most provoking Contempt, and a Crime of the deepest dye. To break through the Laws of a Kingdom is bad enough; but to make *Ballads* upon the
Statute.

Statute-Book, and a Jest of Authority, is much worse. Atheists may fancy what they please, but God will *Arise and Maintain his own Cause*, and Vindicate his Honour in due time.

To conclude. Profaneness, tho' never so well corrected, is not to be endured. It ought to be Banish'd without *Proviso*, or Limitation. No pretence of *Character* or Punishment, can excuse it; or any *Stage-Discipline* make it tolerable. 'Tis grating to *Christian Ears*, dishonourable to the Majesty of God, and dangerous in the Example. And in a Word, It tends to no point, unless it be to wear off the Honour of the Practice, to weaken the force of Conscience, and to teach the Language of the Damn'd.

C H A P. III.

The Clergy abused by the Stage.

THE Satyr of the Stage upon the Clergy is extremely Particular. In other Cases, they level at a single Mark, and confine themselves to Persons. But here their Buffoonry takes an unusual Compass: They shoot Chain'd-shot, and strike at Universals. They play upon the Character, and endeavour to expose not only the Men, but the Business. 'Tis true, the Clergy are no small Rub in the Poet's way. 'Tis by their Ministrations that Religion is perpetuated, the other World refresh'd, and the Interest of Virtue kept up. Vice will never have an unlimited Range, nor Conscience be totally subdued, as long as People are so easy as to be Priest-ridden! As long as these Men are look'd on as the Messengers of Heaven, and the Supports of Government, and enjoy their old Pretensions in Credit and Authority; as long as this Grievance continues, the Stage must decline of Course, and Atheism give Ground, and Lewdness lie under Censure,

H

and

The Clergy Abused

and Discouragement. Therefore that Liberty may not be embarrass'd, nor Principles make Head against Pleasure, the Clergy must be attack'd, and rendred Ridiculous.

To represent a Person fairly and without disservice to his Reputation, two Things are to be observ'd. First, He must not be ill used by others: Nor, Secondly, be made to play the Fool himself. This latter way of Abuse is rather the worst, because here a Man is a sort of *Felo de se*; and appears Ridiculous by his own Fault. The Contradiction of both these Methods is practis'd by the Stage. To make sure Work on't, they leave no Stone unturn'd, the whole *Common-place* of Rudeness is run through. They strain their Invention and their Malice: And overlook nothing in ill-Nature, or ill-Manners to gain their Point.

To give some Instances of their Civility:
18. 16. 20. In the *Spanish Fryar*, *Dominick* is made a Pimp for *Lorenzo*; He is call'd a parcel of Holy Guts and Garbage, and said to have room in his Belly for his Church-steeple.

Dominick has a great many of these Compliments bestow'd upon him. And to make the Railing more effectual, you have a general stroke or two upon the Profession. Would you know what are the
Infallible

+ See also *Ways & Means*: *Simon Sprung*,
The Prisoner at Large: *Rather Frank*
and the *Devil* in the *Castle Spectre*.
Rather Frank in the *Duenna*.
The Road to Ruin. A. S. S. The Will.
Some of the *Whigs* Song.

Infalible Church-Remedies. Why 'tis to
Live Impudently, and Swear Devoutly, A p. 37.
 little before this, *Dominick* counterfeits
 himself Sick, retires, and leaves *Lorenzo*
 and *Elvira* together; And then the Re-
 mark upon the Intrigue follows. 'You see, p. 23.
 'Madam (says *Lorenzo*) 'tis Interest go-
 'verns all the World. He Preaches against
 'Sin, why? Because he gets by't: He
 'holds his Tongue, why? Because so much
 'more is bidden for his Silence. 'Tis but
 'giving a Man his Price, and Principles
 'of Church are bought off as easily as
 'they are in State: No Man will be a
 'Rogue for nothing; but Compensation
 'must be made, so much Gold for so much
 'Honesty, and then a Church-Man will
 'break the Rules of Chers. For the Black
 'Bishop, will skip into the White, and
 'the White into the Black, without Con-
 'sidering whether the remove be Law-
 'ful.

At last *Dominick* is discover'd to the
 Company, makes a dishonorable *Exit*, and
 is push'd off the Stage by the Rabble. This
 is great Justice! The Poet takes care to
 make him first a Knave, and then an Ex-
 ample: But his Hand is not even. For
 Lewd *Lorenzo* comes off with *flying Colours*.
 'Tis not the Fault which is corrected, but

The Clergy Abused

the Priest. The Author's Discipline is seldom without a Bias. He commonly gives the *Laitie* the Pleasure of an ill Action, and the *Clergy* the Punishment.

Country
Wife, p. 6.

f. 35.

iii.

To proceed. *Horner* in his general Remarks upon Men, delivers it as a sort of Maxim, *that your Church-man is the greatest Atheist*. In this Play *Harcourt* puts on the Habit of a Divine. *Alishea* does not think him what he appears; but *Sparkish* who could not see so far, endeavours to divert her Suspicion. *I tell you (says he) this is Ned Harcourt of Cambridge, you see he has a sneaking College-look*. Afterwards his Character is sufficiently abused by *Sparkish* and *Lucy*; but not so much, as by Himself. He tells you in an *Aside*, *he must suit his Style to his Coat*. Upon this wise Recollection, He talks like a servile, impertinent Fop.

In the *Orphan*, The Young Soldier *Chamont* calls the Chaplain *Sir Gravity*, and treats him with the Language of *Thee* and *Thou*. The Chaplain instead of returning the Contempt, flatters *Chamont* in his Folly, and pays a Respect to his Pride. The Cavalier encourag'd, I suppose, by this Sneaking, proceeds to all the Excesses of Rudeness.

— is there not one p. 25.
 Of all thy Tribe that's Honest in your School?
 The Pride of your Superiours makes ye Slaves:
 Ye all live Loathsome, Sneaking, Servile lives:
 Not free enough to practise generous Truth,
 Tho' ye pretend to teach it to the World.

After a little Pause for Breath, the Raising improves:

If thou wouldst have me not condemn thy Office,
 And Character, think all thy Brethren Knaves,
 Thy Trade a Cheat, and thou its worst Pro- p. 26.
 fessor:
 Inform me; for I tell thee, Priest I'll know.

The Bottom of the Page is down-right Porter's Rhetorick.

Art thou then
 So far concern'd in't? —
 Curse on that formal steady Villain's Face!
 Just so do all Bawds look; Nay Bawds, they say,
 Can Pray upon Occasion; talk of Heaven; Ibid.
 Turn up their gogling Eye-balls, rail at Vice;
 Dissemble, Lye, and Preach like any Priest,
 Art thou a Bawd?

The Old Batchelour has a Throw at the
 Dissenting Ministers. The Pimp Setter pro-

The Clergy Abused

vides their Habit for Bellmour to Debauch *Letitia*. The Dialogue runs thus.

Bell. *And hast thou provided Necessaries?*

Old Batch. p. 19, 20. *Setzer. All, all Sir; the large sanctified Hat, and the little precise Band, with a swinging long Spiritual Cloak, to cover Carnal Knavery,--- not forgetting the black Patch which Tribulation Spintext wears as I'm inform'd upon one Eye, as a penal Mourning for the --- Offences of his Youth, &c.*

p. 27. *Barnaby calls another of that Character Mr. Frig, and Fondlemise carries on the Humour lewdly in Play-House Cant; And to hook the Church of England into the Abuse, he tacks a Chaplain to the End of the Description.*

p. 41. *Lucy gives another Proof of the Poet's good Will, but a little Scurrilities are not worth repeating.*

p. 73. *In the Double Dealer, the discourse between Maskwell and Saygrace is very notable. Maskwell had a design to cheat Melifont of his Mistress, and engages the Chaplain in the Inttigue: There must be a Levite in the Case; For without one of them have a finger in't; no Plot publick, or private can expect to prosper.*

To go on in the order of the Play.

Maskwell calls out at Saygrace's Door, Mr. Saygrace, Mr. Saygrace.

The other answers, Sweet Sir, I will bat
Pen

Pen the last Line of an Acrostick, and bewitch you in the twinkling of an Ejaculation, in the Pronouncing of an Amen, &c.

Mask. Nay good Mr. Saygrace, do not prolong the time, &c.

Saygrace. You shall prevail; I would break off in the middle of a Sermon, to do you Pleasure.

Mask. You could not do me a greater — except — the business in Hand — have you provided a Habit for Mellifont?

Saygr. I have, &c.

Mask. Have you stitch'd the Gown-sleeve, that he may be puzzled and waste time in putting it on?

Saygr. I have; the Gown will not be indued without Perplexity. There is a little more profane, and abusive Stuff behind, but let that pass.

The Author of *Don Sebastian* strikes at the *Bishops* through the sides of the *Musti*, and borrows the Name of the *Turk* to make the *Christian* ridiculous. He knows the transition from one Religion to the other is natural, the Application easy, and the Audience but too well prepar'd. And should they be at a loss, he has elsewhere given them a *Key* to understand him.

For Priests of all Religions are the same.

*Abfal. and
Ach.*

H 4

How-

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However that the Sense may be perfectly intelligible, he makes the Invektive General, changes the Language, and rails in the Style of Christendom.

Benducar speaks,

*— Church-men tho' they itch to govern all,
Are silly, woful, aukward Politicians:
They make lame Mischief tho' they mean well.*

So much the better, for 'tis a sign they are not beaten to the Trade. The next Lines are an Illustration taken from a *Taylor*.

*Their Int'rest is not finely drawn and hid,
But Seams are coarsely bungled up and seen.*

p. 24.

This *Benducar* was a rare Spokesman for a first Minister; and would have fitted *John of Leyden* most exactly?

In the Fourth *Act*, the *Mufti* is Depos'd and *Captain Tom* reads him a shrewd Lecture at parting. But let that pass.

To go on, *Mustapha* threatens his great Patriarch to put him to the Rack. Now you shall hear what an answer of Fortitude and Discretion is made for the *Mufti*.

Mufti. *I hope you will not be so barbarous to torture me. We may preach Suffering to others, but alas holy Flesh is too well pamper'd*

to endure *Martyrdom*. By the way, if flinching from *Suffering* be a proof of *Holy Flesh*, the Poet is much a Saint in his Constitution, witness his *Dedication* of *King Arthur*. P. 96.

In *Cleomenes*, *Cassandra* rails against Religion at the Altar, and in the midst of a Publick Solemnity.

Accurs'd be thou, Grass-eating fodder'd God! P. 32.
Accurs'd thy Temple! More accurs'd thy
Priests!

She goes on in a mighty Huff, and charges the Gods and Priesthood with Confederacy, and Imposture. This Rant is very unlikely at *Alexandria*. No People are more bigotted in their Superstition than the *Ægyptians*; Nor any more resenting of such an Affront. This Satyr then must be strangely out of Fashion, and Probability. No matter for that; it may work by way of Inference, and be serviceable at Home. And 'tis a handsom Complement to Libertines and Atheists.

We have much such another swaggering against Priests in *Oedipus*.

Why seek I Truth from thee?
The smiles of Courtiers and the Harlots teart,
The Tradesmens Oaths, and Mourning of an
Heir,

Are

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Are Truths to what Priests tell.

Oedip. p.
38.

*O why has Priesthood privilege to Lye,
And you to be believ'd!*

And since they are thus Lively, I have
one Word or two to say to the Play.

When *Ageon* brought the News of King
Polybus's Death, *Oedipus* was wonderfully
surpriz'd at the Relation.

p. 48.

O all ye Powers is't possible? What, Dead!

And why not? Was the Man invulne-
rable or immortal? Nothing of that: He
was only Fourscore and Ten Years old, that
was his main Security. And if you will
believe the Poet, he

It. d.

*Fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long,
Ev'n wondred at because dropt no sooner.*

And which is more, *Oedipus* must be ac-
quainted with his Age, having spent the
greatest part of his Time with him at *Co-
rinth*. So that in short, the pith of the
Story lies in this Circumstance. A Prince
of Ninety Years was dead, and one who
was wondred at for dying no sooner. And
now why so much Exclamation upon this
Occasion? Why must all the Powers in
Being, be summon'd in to make the News
Cre-

Credible? This *Pass* of *Interjections* would have been more seasonably raised, if the Man had been alive; for that by the Poet's Confession had been much the stranger Thing. However *Oedipus* is almost out of his Wits about the Matter, and is urgent for an account of Particulars.

*That so the Tempest of my Joys may rise
By just Degrees, and hit at last the Stars.* *Ibid.*

This is an empty ill proportion'd Rant, and without warrant in Nature or Antiquity. *Sophocles* does not represent *Oedipus* in such Raptures of extravagant Surprise. In the next Page, there's another Flight about *Polybus* his Death, somewhat like this. It begins with a *Noverim Universi*. You would think *Oedipus* was going to make a *Bond*.

Know, be it known to the limits of the World;

This is scarce Sense, be it known.

*Yet farther, let it pass you dazzling roof,
The Mansion of the Gods, and strike them deaf
With Everlasting peals of Thundring joy.*

This Fustian puts me in mind of a Couplet of Taylor's the Water-Poet, which for the

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the Beauty of the Thought are not very unlike.

*What if a Humble-Bee should chance to strike,
With the But-End of an Antartick Pole.*

I grant Mr. Dryden clears himself of this *Act* in his *Vindication* of the Duke of Guise. But then why did he let these crude Fancies pass uncorrected in his Friend? Such fluttering ungovern'd Transports, are fitter for a Boy's *Declamation* than a *Tragedy*. But I shall trouble myself no farther with this *Play*. To return therefore to the Argument in hand. In the *Provok'd Wife* Sir John Brute puts on the Habit of a Clergy-man; counterfeits himself Drunk; quarrels with the *Constable*; and is knock'd down and seiz'd. He rails, swears, curses, is lewd and profane, to all the Heights of Madness and Debauchery: The *Officers* and *Justice* break Jest upon him, and make him a sort of Representative of this *Order*.

*Provok'd
Wife, p.
45, 46, 51,
52.*

This is rare *Protestant* Diversion, and very much for the Credit of the *Reformation*! The Church of England, I mean the Men of Her, is the only Communion in the World, that will endure such Insolences as these: The *Relapse* is, if possible, more singularly abusive. *Bull* the Chaplain wishes

wishes the Married couple Joy, in Language horribly Smuttry and Profane. To transcribe it would blot the Paper too much. In the next Page, *Young Fashion* desires *Bull* to make haste to Sir Tunbally. He answers very decently, *I fly my good Lord*. At the end of this *Act*, *Bull* speaks to the Case of Bigamy, and determines it thus. *I do confess to take two Husbands for the Satisfaction of— is to commit the Sin of Exorbitancy, but to do it for the peace of the Spirit, is no more than to be Drunk by way of Physick; besides, to prevent a Parent's wrath is to avoid the Sin of Disobedience, for when the Parent is Angry, the Child is froward: The Conclusion is insolently Profane, and let it lie: The Spirit of this thought is borrow'd from Ben Johnson's Bartholemew Fair; only the Profaneness is mightily improved, and the Abuse thrown off the Meeting-House, upon the Church. The Wit of the Parents being angry, and the Child froward, is all his own. Bull has more of this heavy Stuff upon his Hand. He tells Young Fashion, your Worship's goodness is unspeakable, yet there is one thing seems a point of Conscience; And Conscience is a tender Babe, &c.*

These Poets I observe when they grow lazy, and are inclined to Nonsense, they commonly get a Clergy-man to speak it.
Thus

p. 89. Thus they pass their own Dulness for Humour, and gratifie their Ease, and their Malice at once. *Coupler* instructs *Young Fashion* which way *Ball* was to be managed. He tells him as *Chaplains* go now, he must be brab'd high, He wants Money, Preferment, Wine, and a Whore. Let this be procured for him, and I'll warrant thee he speaks Truth like an Oracle.

p. 94. A few Lines forward, the Rudeness is still more gross, and dash'd with Smut, the common *Play-House* Ingredient. 'Tis not long before *Coupler* falls into his old Civilities. He tells *Young Fashion*, Last Night the Devil run away with the Parson of *Fatgoose Living*. Afterwards *Ball* is plentifully rail'd on in downwright *Bil-lings-gate*; made to appear Silly, Servile, and Profane; and treated both in Posture and Language, with the utmost Contempt.

p. 95, 97, 105.

I could cite more *Plays* to this purpose; But these are sufficient to shew the Temper of the Stage,

Thus we see how hearty these People are in their Ill Will! How they attack Religion under every Form, and pursue the Priesthood through all the Subdivisions of Opinion. Neither *Jews* nor *Heathens*, *Turks* nor *Christians*, *Rome* nor *Geneva*, *Church* nor *Conventicle*, can escape

scape them. They are afraid, lest Virtue should have any Quarters undisturbed, Conscience any Corner to retire to, or God be Worshipped in any Place. 'Tis true, their Force seldom carries up to their Malice: They are too eager in the Combat to be happy in the Execution. The Abuse is often both gross and clumsy, and the Wit as wretched as the Manners. Nay, Talking won't always satisfy them: They must ridicule the *Habit*, as well as the *Function* of the Clergy. 'Tis not enough for them to play the Fool, unless they do it in *Pontificalibus*. The Farce must be play'd in a Religious Figure, and under the Distinctions of their Office! Thus the Abuse strikes strong upon the Sense; The contempt is better spread, and the little *Idea* is apt to return upon the same Appearance. +

And now, does this Rudeness go upon any Authorities? Was the Priesthood always thought thus insignificant, and do the Ancient Poets pass it in this manner? This Point shall be tried, I shall run through the most considerable Authors, that the Reader may see how they treat the Argument. *Homer* stands highest upon the Roll, and is the first Poet both in Time, and Quality; I shall therefore begin with him. 'Tis true he wrote no
Plays;

+ See the Clergy more respectably exhibited in
the Court of *Narbonne*.
Lovers rows and, (I think) in *Lives & Charities*.

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Plays; but for Decency, Practice, and general Opinion, his Judgment may well be taken. Let us see then how the *Priests* are treated in his *Poem*, and what sort of Rank they hold,

Chryses, *Apollo's* Priest, appears at a Council of War with his Crown and gilt Scepter. He offers a valuable Ransom for his Daughter, and presses his Relation to *Apollo*. All the Army excepting *Agamemnon* are willing to consider his Character, and comply with his Proposals. But this *General* refuses to part with the Lady, and sends away her Father with disrespect. *Apollo* thought himself affronted with this Usage, and Revenges the Indignity in a Plague.

Hom. II.

a p. 3. &

dein Ed.

Screevel.

*Οὐρανὸν ἔχοντα ἱερεὺς ἀντιφάσκει
Ἀργείων.

II. B p. 91.

Ibid p. 92.

II. c p.

154, 155.

Adrastus and *Amphiaraus* the Sons of *Melampus* a Prophet, commanded a considerable extent of Country in *Troas*, and brought a Body of Men to King *Priam's* Assistance. And *Ennomus* the Augur commanded the Troops of *Mysia* for the Besieged.

Phlegon and *Idaeus* were the Sons of *Dares* the Priest of *Vulcan*. They appear in an Equipage of Quality, and charge *Diomedes* the third Hero in the *Grecian* Army

Army. *Idem* after the Misfortune of the Combat, is brought off by *Vulcan*. *Dolon* was *Priest* to *Scamander*, and regarded like the God he belong'd to,

Ib. p. 154.

155.

Od. 5. 8. 11. 12. 13. 14.

Ib. p. 158.

Ulysses in his return from *Troy*, took *Ismarus* by Storm, and makes Prize of the whole Town, excepting *Maron* and his Family. This *Maron* was *Apollo's Priest*, and preserv'd out of respect to his Function: He presents *Ulysses* nobly in Gold, Plate, and Wine; And this *Hero* makes an honourable mention of him, both as to his Quality, and way of Living.

Odyf. 1. p.

14, 71, 81.

These are all the *Priests* I find mentioned in *Homer*; and we see how fairly the Poet treats them, and what sort of Figure they made in the World.

To the Testimony of *Homer*, I shall joyn that of *Virgil*, who tho' he follows at a great distance of Time, was an Author of the first Rank, and wrote the same kind of Poetry with the other. Now *Virgil*, tho' he is very extraordinary in his Genius, in the Compass of his Learning, in the Musick and Majesty of his Style; yet the exactness of his Judgment seems to be his peculiar, and most distinguishing Talent. He had the truest

Relish imaginable, and always described Things according to *Nature, Custom, and Decency*. He wrote with the greatest Command of *Temper*, and *Superiority* of good *Sense*. He is never lost in Smoak and Rapture, nor overborn with Poetick Fury; but keeps his Fancy warm and his Reason cool at the same time. Now this great Master of Propriety never mentions any *Priests* without some *Marks of Advantage*. To give some Instances as they lie in Order.

When the *Trojans* were consulting what was to be done with the *Wooden-Horse*, and some were for lodging it within the Walls: *Laocoon* appears against this Opinion, at the head of a numerous Party; harangues with a great deal of *Sense*, and *Resolution*; and examines the *Machine* with his Lance. In fine, He advised so well, and went so far in the Discovery of the *Stratagem*; that if the *Trojans* had not been ungovernable, and as it were
Æneid. 2. stupified by Fate and Folly, he had saved the Town.

*Trojaque nunc staret, Priamique arx alta
 maneres.*

This *Laocoon* was *Neptune's Priest*, and either Son to *Priam*, or Brother to *Anchises*.

chies, who was of the Royal Family. The next we meet with, is *Panthus* Apollo's Priest. He is called *Panthus Oryades*, which is an Argument his Father was well known. His Acquaintance with *Enas*, to whose House he was carrying his little Grandson, argues him to be a Person of Condition. *Panthus* after a short Relation of the Posture of Affairs, joins *Enas's* little Handful of Men, Charges in with him when the Town was seiz'd, and fired, and at last dies handsomely in the Action.

*Ruins in
Lor.*

Eneid. 2.

Ibid.

The next is *Anius* King of *Delos*, Prince and Priest in one Person.

*Rex Anius, Rex idem hominum Phabique
Sacerdos.*

Eneid. 3.

When *Enas* was outed at *Troy*, and in quest of a new Country, he came to an Anchor at *Delos*; *Anius* meets him in a Religious Habit, receives him civilly, and obliges him with his Oracle. In the Book now mention'd, we have another of Apollo's Priests, his Name is *Helenus*, Son of *Priam* and King of *Chabria*. He entertains *Enas* with a great deal of Friendship, and Magnificence, gives him many material Directions, and makes him a rich Present at parting. To this Prince, if you

Ibid.

Æneid.
1st.

Æn. 6.

Ibid.

please, we may joyn a Princess of the same Profession; and that is *Rhea Sylvia* Daughter to *Numitor* King of *Alba*, and Mother to *Romulus*, and *Remus*. This Lady *Virgil* calls — *Regina Sacerdos*, a Royal Priestess. Farther: When *Aeneas* made a Visit upon Business to the Shades below, He had for his Guide, the famous *Sibylla Cumæa*, who belong'd to *Apollo*. When he came thither, amongst the rest of his Acquaintance, he saw *Polybates* a Priest of *Ceres*. This *Polybates* is mention'd with the three Sons of *Antenor*, with *Glaucus*, and *Therfilocus*, who commanded in Chief in the *Trojan Auxiliaries*: So that you may know his Quality by his Company. When *Aeneas* had passed on farther, he saw *Orpheus* in *Elysium*: The Poet calls him the *Thracian Priest*. There needs not be much said of *Orpheus*: He is famous for his Skill in Musick, Poetry, and Religious Ceremonies: He was one of the Hero's of Antiquity, and a principal Adventurer in the Expedition of the *Golden Fleece*.

In the Seventh *Æneid*, the Poet gives in a List of the Princes, and General Officers who came into the Assistance of *Turnus*; Amongst the rest he tells you,

Quin

*Quin & Marubiu venit de gente Sacer dos,
Archippi regis missu fortissimus Umbro.*

This Priest he commends both for his Courage and his Skill in Physick, Natural Magick, and Philosophy. He understood the Virtues of Plants, and could lay Passions and Poisons asleep. His Death was extremely regretted by his Country, who made a Pompous and Solemn Mourning for him.

*Te nemus Angitia vitrea, te Fucius, unda, Aeneid. 7.
Te liquidi flevere lacus.*

The Potitii, and the Pinarj, mention'd Aeneid. 8. were as Livy observes, chosen out of the first Quality of the Country, and had the Priesthood hereditary to their Family. Togo on, Aemonides, and Chlorens make a glistering Figure in the Field, and are very remarkable for the Curiosity of their Armour, and Habit. Aemonides's Finery is pass'd over in general.

Totus collucens veste atque insignibus armis. Aeneid 10

But the Equipage of Chlorens is flourish'd out at length, and as I remember, admired by Macrobius as one of the Master-pieces.

Æneid.
11.

Æneid. 9,
10, 11.

Guther.
de jure Ve-
ter. pontif.

pieces of *Virgil* in Description. In short, He is all Gold, Purple, Scarlet, and Embroidery; and as rich as Nature, Art, and Rhetoric can make him. To these I might add *Rharnes*, *Astias*, and *Tolumnius*, who were all Persons of Condition, and had Considerable Posts in the Army.

It may be these last were not strictly Priests. Their Function was rather *Prophetick*. They interpreted the Resolutions of the Gods, by the voice of Birds, the Inspection of Sacrifices, and their Observations of Thunder. This made their Character counted Sacred, and their Relation to the Deity particular. And therefore the *Romans* ranged them in the Order of the Priests.

Thus we see the admired *Homer*, and *Virgil*, always treat the Priests fairly, and describe them in Circumstances of Credit. If 'tis said, that the Instances I have given, are mostly in Names of *Fiction*, and in Persons who had no Being, unless in the Poet's fancy: I answer, I am not concern'd in the History of the Relation. Whether the Muster be true or false, 'tis all one to my purpose. This is certain, had the Priests been People of such slender Consideration as our *Stage-Poets* endeavour to make them; they must have

ap-

appear'd in a different Figure; or rather, have been left out as too little for that sort of *Poem*. But *Homer* and *Virgil* had other Sentiments of Matters; They were govern'd by the Reason of Things, and the common usage of the World: They knew the *Priesthood* a very reputable Employment, and always esteem'd as such. To have used the *Priests* ill, they must have call'd their own Discretion in question: They must have run into impropriety, and fallen foul upon Custom, Manners, and Religion. Now 'twas not their way to play the Knave and the Fool together: They had more Sense than to do a silly thing, only for the Satisfaction of doing an ill one.

I shall now go on, to enquire what the Greek *Tragedians* will afford us upon the present Subject. There are but two *Plays* in *Aeschylus*, where the *Ministers* of the Gods are represented. The one is in his *Eumenides*, and here *Apollo's Priestess* only opens the *Play*, and appears no more. The other is in his *Siege of Thebes*. In this *Tragedy*, the *Prophet Amphiarauus* is one of the Seven Commanders against the *Town*. He has the Character of a Modest, Brave Officer, and of one who rather affected to be great in Action, than Noise.

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In *Sophocles's Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Jupiter's Priest* has a short part. He appears at the Head of an *Address*, and delivers the Harangue by the King's Order. *Oedipus* in his Passion treats *Tiresias* ruggedly; *Tiresias* replies with Spirit and Freedom, and plainly tells him he was none of his Servant, but *Apollo's*.

Oedip. Tyr.
p. 148.

Ibid. 169. 'Οὐ γὰρ τὴν αἰὲν δῖον ἄλλ' Ἀπόλλωνος.

And here we may observe that all *Oedipus* his reproaches relates to *Tiresias's* person; there is no such Thing as a general Imputation upon his Function: But the *English Oedipus* makes the Priest-hood an Imposturous Profession; and rails at the whole Order. In the next Tragedy, *Creon* charges *Tiresias* with subornation; and that he intended to make a Penny of his Prince. The Priest holds up his Character, speaks to the ill Usage with an Air of gravity, calls the King Son, and foretells him his Misfortune.

Antig. p.
259, 258.

To go on to *Euripides*, for *Sophocles* has nothing more. This Poet in his *Phanissa* brings in *Tiresias* with a very unacceptable report from the Oracle. He tells *Creon* that either his Son must die, or the City be lost: *Creon* keeps himself within Temper, and gives no ill Language. And even when

when *Menaeus* had kill'd himself, he neither complains of the Gods, nor reproaches the *Prophet*. *Eurip.*
Phoeniss. p.
158, 159.

In his *Baccha*, *Tiresias* is honourably used by *Cadmus*; and *Pentheus* who threatned him, is afterwards Punish'd for his Impiety. In another *Play*, *Apollo's Priestess* comes in upon a creditable account, and is respectfully Treated. *Iphigenia Agamemnon's Daughter* is made *Priestess* to *Diana*; and her Father thought himself happy in her Employment. These are all the *Priests* I Remember, represented in *Euripides*. To conclude the ancient *Tragedians* together: *Seneca* seems to follow the Conduct of *Euripides*, and secures *Tiresias* from being outraged. *Oedipus* carries it smoothly with him, and only desires him to put with the Oracle, and declare the Guilty Person. This *Tiresias* excuses, and afterwards the Heat of the expostulation falls upon *Creon*. *Calchas*, if not strictly a *Priest*, was an *Augur*, and had a Religious Relation. Upon this account, *Agamemnon* calls him *interpreter Deorum*; the Reporter of Fate, and the God's *Nuntio*; and gives him an honourable Character. *Bacch.*
AE. 1.
AE. 4.
Jon. AE. 5.
Iphig. in
Aulid. &
in Tour,
Oedip.
Troad. 4.
2. p. 193.

This Author is done; I shall therefore pass on to the *Comedians*. And here, *Aristophanes* is so declared an *Atheist*, that

I think him not worth the citing. Besides, he has but little upon the Argument: And where he does engage it, the *Priests* have every jot as good Quarter as the Gods.

Plut. Ran As for *Terence*, he neither represents any
Agss. *Priests*, nor so much as mentions them. *Chrysalus* in *Plautus* describes *Theotimus* *Diana's Priest*, as a Person of Quality, and Figure. In his *Rudens*, we have a *Priestess* upon the Stage, which is the only Instance in this Poet. She entertains the two Women who were wrecked, and is commended for her hospitable Temper. The Procurer *Labrax* swaggers that he will force the Temple, and begins the Attack.

Rud. A. 1. *Demades* a Gentleman, is surprized at his
S. A. 2. 3. Insolence, and threatens him with Revenge. The report of so bold an attempt made him cry out *Quis homo est tanta confidentia, qui Sacerdotem audeat violare?* It seems in those Days, 'twas very infamous to affront a Holy Character, and break in upon the *Guards* of Religion! Thus we see, how the Ancient Poets behaved themselves in the Argument. *Priests* seldom appear in their Plays. And when they come, 'tis Business of Credit that brings them. They are treated like Persons of Condition. They Act up to their Relation; neither sneak, nor prevaricate, nor do any thing unbecoming their Office.

And

And now a word or two of the *Moderators*.

The famous *Cornville* and *Mollere*, bring no Priest of any kind upon the Stage. The former leaves out *Tiresias* in his *Oedipus*: tho' this Omission baulks his thought, and maims the *Fable*. What therefore but regard to Religion could keep him from the use of this Liberty? As I am inform'd the same reservedness is practis'd in *Spain*, and *Italy*; And that there is no Theatre in *Europe*, excepting the *English*, that entertains the *Audience* with *Priests*.

This is certainly the right Method, and best secures the Out-works of Piety. The Holy Function is much too Solemn to be play'd with. Christianity is for no Fooling: Neither the *Place*, the *Occasion*, nor the *Actors* are fit for such a Representation. To bring the *Church* into the *Play-House*, is the way to bring the *Play-House* into the *Church*. 'Tis apt to turn Religion into *Romance*; and make unthinking People conclude, that all Serious Matters are nothing but *Fable*, *Fiction*, and *Design*. 'Tis true, the *Tragedies* at *Athens* were a sort of *Homilies*, and design'd for the Instruction of the People. To this purpose, they are all Clean, Solemn, and Sententious. *Plautus* likewise informs us that the *Comedians* used to teach the People Morality. The
case

Rud. A. 4.
S. 7.

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case standing thus, 'tis less surprising to find the *Priests* sometimes appear. The Play had grave Argument, and Pagan Indulgence, to plead in it's behalf. But our Poets steer by another *Compass*: Their Aim is to *destroy Religion*, their *preaching* is against *Sermons*; and their Business, but Diversion at the best. In short, Let the Character be never so well managed, no Christian Priest (especially) ought to come upon the *Stage*. For where the Business is an Abuse, and the Place a Profanation, the demureness of the Manner, is but a poor excuse. Monsieur *Racine* is an Exception to what I have observ'd in *France*. In his *Athalie*, *Joad* the High-Priest has a large part. But, then the Poet does him Justice in his Station; he makes him Honest and Brave, and gives him a shining Character throughout. *Mathan* is another Priest in the same Tragedy. He turns Renegado, and revolts from God to *Baal*. He is a very ill Man, but makes a considerable Appearance, and is one of the Top of *Athalie*'s Faction. And as for the *Blemishes* of his Life, they all stick upon his own Honour, and reach no farther than his Person: In fine, the Play is a very Religious Poem; 'Tis upon the Matter, all *Sermon* and *Anthem*. And if it were not design'd for the *Theatre*, I have nothing to Object.

Let

I do not see
this.

Let us now just look over our own Country-men, till King Charles the Second. *Shakespear* takes the Freedom to represent the Clergy in several of his Plays. But for the most part, he holds up the Function, and makes them neither Act, nor Suffer any thing unhandson. In one Play or two, he is much bolder with the Order, * *Sir Hugh Evans* a Priest is too Comical and Secular in his Humour. However he understands his Post, and converses with the Freedom of a Gentleman. I grant in *Love's Labour lost*, the Curate plays the Fool egregiously; and so does the Poet too; for the whole Play is a very silly one. In the History of *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Sir John* Parson of *Wrotham* swears, games, wencheth, pads, tilts, and drinks. This is extremely bad, and like the Author of the *Relapse*, &c. Only with this Difference; *Shakespear's* *Sir John* has some Advantage in his Character. He appears Loyal and Stout; He brings in *Sir John* *Acton*, and other Rebels Prisoners. He is rewarded by the King, and the Judge uses him Civilly and with Respect. In short, He is represented Lewd, but not Little. And the Disgrace falls rather on the Person than the Office. But the *Relapse's* Business, is to sink the Notion, and Murther the Character, and make the Function

Henry 8. th.
Hen. 4. Pt. 2.
Henry VI. Pt.

Measure
for Measure. Much
add about
Nothing.
Twelfth
Night.
Henry 4th.

Pt. 1st.
Henry 6th.
P. 3d.
Romeo and
Julius,
Merry
Wives of
Windfor.

As you like it
Hamlet A.V.

So also in Twelfth night where the Poet
personates Sir Topaz: also Sir Oliver Marten
in As you like it.

cation despicable: So that upon the whole,
Shakespeare is by much the gentler En-
my, than our modern I am afraid.
Towards the end of the *Silent Woman*,
Ben Jonson brings in a *Clergy-man*, and
a *Christian* in their *Habits*. But then he
premises a handsome Excuse, acquaints the
Audience, that the *Poets* are but sor-
row'd, and throws in a *Satire* for the Ho-
nour of either Profession. In the Third
Act, we have another *Clergy-man*; He
is abused by *Conard*, and a little by *Mu-
rose*. But his Lady checks him for the ill
Breeding of the Usage. In his *Magnetical
Lady*, *Tale of a Tub*, and *Sad Shepherd*, there
are Priests who manage but untowardly.
But these Plays were his last Works, which
Mr. Dryden calls his *Dorages*. This Author
has no more Priests, and therefore we'll
take leave in Ourselves.
Beaumont and Fletcher in the *Faithful
Shepherds*, The *False one*, A Wife for a
Month; and the *Knight of Malta*, give
us both Priests and Bishops, part Heathen
and part Christian: But all of them save
their Reputation, and make a Creditable
Appearance. The Priest in the *Spanish
Lacy*, and Spanish Curate are ill used.
The first is made a Fool, and the other
a Knave. Indeed, they seem to be brought
in on purpose to make sport, and disserve
Religion.

Religion. And so much for *Reverend*
Fletcher.

Thus we see the *English* *Stragglers* always
 been out of Order, but never in the De-
 gree 'tis at present.

I shall now take Leave of the *Reader*,
 and touch a little upon *History* and *Argu-
 ment*.

And here I shall briefly shew the Right
 the *Clergy* have to *Regard*, and fair *Usage*,
 upon these Three following *Accounts*.

I. *Because of their Relation to the Deity.*

II. *Because of the Importance of their Of-
 fice.*

III. *They have prescription for their Pri-
 vilege. Their Function has been in Possession
 of Esteem in all Ages, and Countries.*

I. Upon the Account of their Relation to
 the Deity.

The Holy *Order* is appropriated to the
 Divine *Worship*. And a *Priest* has the
 peculiar Honour to belong to nothing less
 than God Almighty. Now the *Gravity* of

the *Servic* always rises in proportion to
 the *Quality* and *Greatness* of the *Masters*.

And for this Reason, 'tis more *Honourable*
 to serve a *Prince*, than a private *Parish*.

To apply this, *Christian* *Priests* are the
 Principal *Ministers* of God's *Kingdom*.

They

They represent his Person, publish his Laws, pass his Pardons, and preside in his Worship. To expose a *Priest*, much more to burlesque his Function, is an Affront to the Deity. All Indignities done to Ambassadors, are interpreted upon their Masters and Reveng'd as such. To outrage the *Ministers* of Religion, is in effect to deny the Being, or Providence of God; and to treat the *Bible* like a *Romance*: As much as to say, the Stories of another World are nothing but a little *Priestcraft*; and therefore I am resolved to lash the Profession. But to droll upon the Institution of God; to make his Ministers cheap, and his Authority contemptible; to do this is little less than open Defiance. 'Tis a sort of Challenge to awaken his Vengeance, to exert his Omnipotence, and do Right to his Honour. If the Profession of a Courtier was unfashionable, a Prince's *Commission* thought a Scandal, and the *Magistracy* laugh'd at for their Business; the Monarch had need look to himself in time: He may conclude, his Person is despis'd, his Authority but a Jest, and the People ready either to change their Master, or to set up for themselves. Government and Religion, no less than *Trade* subsist upon Reputation. 'Tis true God can't be Deposed, neither does
 ved I his

his Happiness depend upon Homage. But since he does not Govern by Omnipotence, since he leaves Men to their Liberty, Acknowledgment must sink, and Obedience decline, in proportion to the Lessenings of Authority. How provoking an Indignity of this kind must be, is easie to imagine.

II. The Functions and Authorities of Religion have great Influence on *Society*. The Interest of this Life lies very much in the Belief of another. So that if our Hopes were bounded with *Sight* and *Sense*, if *Eternity* was out of the Case, General Advantage, and Publick Reason, and Secular Policy, would oblige us to be just to the *Priesthood*. For *Priests*, and Religion always stand and fall together; Now Religion is the Basis of Government, and Man is a wretched Companion without it. When Conscience takes its Leave, Good Faith, and Good Nature go with it. *Atheism* is all Self, Mean and Mercenary. The *Atheist* has no *Hereafter*, and therefore will be sure to make the most of this World. Interest, and Pleasure are the Gods he Worships, and to these he'll Sacrifice every Thing else.

III. The *Priest-hood* ought to be fairly treated, because it has Prescription for this Privilege. This is so evident a Truth, that there is hardly any Age or Country,

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but

The Clergy Abused

but affords sufficient Proof. A just Discourse upon this Subject would be a large Book, but I shall just skim it over and pass on. And

1st. For the Jews. *Josephus* tells us, the Line of *Aaron* made some of the best Pedigrees, and that the *Priests* were reckon'd among the Principal Nobility.

*De Bell.
Judaic.*

*Deut. 17.
9, 10.
2 Chron.
19. 8.*

*Math. 27.
A. 4.
Vid. Selden
de Synedr.*

By the Old Testament we are inform'd that the *High-Priest* was the Second Person in the Kingdom. The Body of that Order had Civil Jurisdiction. And the *Priests* continued Part of the Magistracy in the time of our Saviour. *Jehoiada* the *High-Priest* was thought an Alliance big enough for the Royal Family. He Married the King's Daughter; His Interest and Authority was so great that he broke the Usurpation under *Athalia*; and was at the Head of the Restauration. And lastly the *Assamonean* Race were both Kings and *Priests*.

*2 Chron.
22. 23.*

Joseph.

To Proceed. The *Aegyptian* Monarchy was one of the most antient and best-polish'd upon Record. Here Arts and Sciences, the Improvement of Reason, and the Splendor of Life had its first Rise. Hither 'twas that *Plato* and most of the Celebrated Philosophers travell'd for their Learning. Now in this Kingdom the *Priests* made no vulgar Figure. These with
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the Military Men were the Body of the Nobility, and Gentry. Besides the Business of Religion, the *Priests* were the Publick *Annalists*, and kept the Records of *History*, and *Government*. They were many of them bred in Courts, formed the Education of their Princes, and assisted at their Councils. When *Joseph* was Viceroy of *Diod. Sic. Egypt*, and in all the height of his Pomp, and Power, the King Married him to the Daughter of *Potipherah* *Priest of On*. The Text says *Pharaoh gave him her to Wife*. *Gen. 41*. This shews the Match was deliberate Choice, and Royal Favour, no stooping of Quality, or Condescensions of Love, on *Joseph's* Side.

To pass on. The *Persian Magi*, and the *Druids* of *Gaul* were of a Religious Profession, and consign'd to the Service of the Gods. Now all these were at the upper End of the Government, and had a great share of Regard and Authority. The Body of the *Indians*, as *Diodorus Siculus* reports, is divided into Seven Parts. The first is the *Clan* of the *Bramines*, the *Priests*, and Philosophers of that Country. ' This *Porph. d. Abst. Lib. 4. Cap. far de Bell. Gall. Lib. 6*. ' Division is the least in Number, but the ' first in Degree. Their Privileges are extraordinary. They are exempted from ' Taxes, and Live Independent of Authority. They are called to the Sacrifices,

The Clergy Abused

‘and take care of Funerals; They are look’d
 ‘on as the Favourites of the Gods, and
 ‘thought skilful in the Doctrins of another
 ‘Life: And upon these Accounts are large-
 ‘ly consider’d in Presents, and Acknow-
 ‘ledgement. The *Priestesses* of *Argos* were
 so Considerable, that *Time* is dated from
 them, and they stand for a Reign in *Chro-
 nology*. The Brave *Romans* are commend-
 ed by *Polybius* for their Devotion to the
 Gods; Indeed they gave great Proof of
 their being in earnest; For when their
 Chief Magistrates, their Consuls them-
 selves, met any of the *Vestals*, they held
 down their *Fasces*, and stoop’d their *Sword*
 and *Mace* to Religion.

Lib. 6.

Sen. in
Controv.

The *Priest-hood* was for some time con-
 fin’d to the *Patrician* Order, that is, to
 the Upper Nobility. And afterwards the
Emperours were generally *High-Priests*
 themselves. The *Romans* in distress en-
 deavour’d to make Friends with *Coriola-
 nus* whom they had banish’d before. To
 this purpose they furnish’d out several So-
 lemn Embassies. Now the Regulation of
 the Ceremony, and the Remarks of the
 Historian, plainly discover that the *Body*
 of the *Priests* were thought not inferior
 to any other. One Testimony from *Tully*
 and I have done. ’Tis in his Harangue to
 the College of the *Priests*. *Cum multa
 divinitus,*

Dion. Ha-
lic.

divinitus, Pontifices, à majoribus nostris inventa atque instituta sunt; tum nihil praeclarius quàm quòd vos eosdem & Religionibus Deorum immortalium, & summa Republica praesse voluerunt, &c. i. e. Amongst the many laudable Instances of our Ancestors Prudence, and Capacity, I know nothing better contrived than their placing your Order at the Helm, and setting the same Persons at the Head both of Religion and Government. Thus we see what Rank the Priesthood held among the Jews, and how Nature taught the Heathen to regard it. And is it not now possess'd of as fair pretences as formerly? Is Christianity any disadvantage to the Holy Office; And does the Dignity of a Religion lessen the Publick Administrations in't? The Priest of the most High God and of Idolatry, can't be compared without Injury. To argue for the Preference is a Reflection upon the Creed. 'Tis true, the Jewish Priest-hood was instituted by God: But every Thing Divine is not of Equal Consideration. Realities are more valuable than Types; And as the Apostle argues, the Order of Melchizedek is greater than that of Aaron. The Author, (I mean the immediate one,) the Authorities, the Business, and the End, of the Christian Priest-hood, are more Noble than those of the Jewish. For is not Christ

*Pro. Domi
ad Pontif*

Hebr. 7.

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greater than *Moses*, *Heaven* better than the Land of *Canaan*, and the *Eucharist* to be prefer'd to all the *Sacrifices*, and *Expiations* of the *Law*? Thus the *Right*, and the *Reason* of things stands. And as for *Fact*, the *Christian World* have not been backward in their *Acknowledgments*. Ever since the first *Conversion* of *Princes*, the *Priesthood* has had no small share of *Temporal Advantage*. The *Codes*, *Novels*, and *Church-History*, are sufficient Evidence what *Sense Constantine* and his *Successors* had of these *Matters*. But I shall not detain the *Reader* in remote *Instances*.

To proceed then to *Times* and *Countries* more generally known. The *People* of *France* are branched into three *Divisions*, of these the *Clergy*, are the *First*. And in consequence of this *Privilege*, at the *Assembly* of the *States*, they are first admitted to *Harangue* before the *King*.

In *Hungary* the *Bishops* are very *Considerable*, and some of them great *Officers* of *State*. In *Poland* they are *Senators*, that is, part of the *Upper Nobles*. In *Muscovy* the *Bishops* have an *Honourable Station*; and the *Present Czar* is descended from the *Patriarchal Line*. I suppose I need say nothing of *Italy*. In *Spain* the *Sees* generally are better endow'd than else-where, and *Wealth* always draws *Consideration*.

The

Davila.
Filmer's
Freehold-
er's Grand.
Inq.

Miræus de
Statu
Relig.
Christ.
Miræus
Ibid.
Fletcher's
Embassy.
Puffendorf
Introducti-
on. à l' H.
istoire.

The *Bishops* hold their Lands by a Military Noble *Tenure*, and are excused from Personal Attendance. And to come toward an end ; They are Earls and Dukes in *France*, and Sovereign Princes in *Germany*. In *England* the *Bishops* are Lords of Parliament : And the *Law* in plain Words distinguishes the *Upper House* into the *Spiritual* and *Temporal Nobility*. And several *Statutes* call the *Bishops Nobles* by direct Implication. To mention nothing more, their *Heraldry* is regulated by *Garster*, and *Blazon'd* by *Stones*, which none under the *Nobility* can pretend to. In this Country of ours, Persons of the First Quality have been in *Orders* : To give an Instance of some few. *Odo* Brother to *William* the Conqueror was *Bishop* of *Baieux*, and Earl of *Kent*. King *Stephen's* Brother was *Bishop* of *Winchester*. *Nevill* Arch-*Bishop* of *York* was Brother to the Great Earl of *Warwick*, and *Cardinal Pool* was of the Royal Family. To come a little lower, and to our own Times. And here we may reckon not a few Persons of Noble Descent in Holy Orders. Witness the *Berklyes*, *Comptons*, *Montagues*, *Crews*, and *Norths* ; The *Annesleys*, *Finches*, *Grahams*, &c. And as for the Gentry, there are not many good Families in *England*, but either have, or have had a *Clergy-man* in them.

Heylin's Cosmog.

25 Hen.
8 Cap.
22.
26 Hen. 8.
Cap. 2.
1 Edw.
6. Cap.
12, &c.
Preamb.

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In short ; The *Priesthood* is the Profession of a Gentleman. A Parson notwithstanding the ignorant Pride of some People, is a Name of Credit, and Authority, both in Religion, and Law. The *Addition* of *Clerk* is at least equal to that of Gentleman. Were it otherwise, the *Profession* would in many Cases be a kind of Punishment. But the *Law* is far from being so singular as to make *Orders* a Disadvantage to *Degree*. No, The Honour of the Family continues, and the *Heraldry* is every jot as safe in the *Church*, as 'twas in the *State*. And yet when the *Laity* are taken leave of, not *Gentleman* but *Clerk* is usually written. This Custom is an Argument the Change is not made for the worse, that the Spiritual Distinction is as valuable as the other ; And to speak Modestly, that the first *Addition* is not lost, but Cover'd. Did the Subject require it, this Point might be farther made good. For the stile of a higher Secular Honour is continued as well with *Priesthood* as without it. A Churchman who is either *Baronet*, or *Baron*, writes himself so, notwithstanding his *Clerkship*. Indeed we can't well imagine the Clergy degraded from Paternal Honour without a strange Reflection on the Country ; without supposing *Julian* at
the

the Helm, the *Laws* Antichristian, and *Infidelity* in the very *Constitution*. To make the Ministers of Religion less upon the score of their Function, would be a Penalty on the *Gospel*, and a contempt of the God of Christianity. 'Tis our Saviour's reasoning; *He that despises you, de-* *S. Luke*
spises Me, and he that despises Me, despises *10.*
Him that sent Me.

I hope what I have offer'd on this Subject will not be misunderstood. There is no Vanity in necessary Defence. To wipe off Aspersions, and rescue Things from Mistake, is but bare Justice: Besides, where the Honour of God, and the Publick Interest are concern'd, a Man is bound to speak. To argue from a resembling Instance. He that has the King's Commission ought to Maintain it. To let it suffer under Rudeness is to betray it. To be tame and silent in such Cases, is not Modesty but Meanness. Humility obliges no Man to desert his Trust; to throw up his Privilege, and prove false to his Character. And is our Saviour's Authority inferiour to that of Princes? Are the Kingdoms of this World more Glorious than that of the next? And can the Concerns of Time be greater than those of Eternity? If not, the reasoning above-mention'd must hold in the Application.

And

And now by this time I conceive the ill Manners of the *Stage* may be in some measure apparent; And that the *Clergy* deserve none of that Coarse Usage which it puts upon them. I confess I know no *Profession* that has made a more creditable Figure, that has better Customs for their Privileges, and better Reasons to maintain them. And here setting aside the Point of Conscience; where lies the Decency of falling foul upon this *Order*? What Propriety is there in Misrepresentation? In confounding Respects, disguising Features, and painting Things out of all Colour and Complexion? This crossing upon Nature and Reason, is great Ignorance, and out of Rule. And now what Pleasure is there in Misbehaviour and Abuse? Is it such an Entertainment to see Religion worried by Atheism, and Things the most Solemn and Significant tumbled and tost by Buffoons? A Man may laugh at a Puppy's tearing a Wardrobe, but I think 'twere altogether as Discreet to beat him off. Well! but the Clergy mismanage sometimes, and they must be told of their Faults. What then? Are the *Poets* their *Ordinaries*? Is the *Pulpit* under the Discipline of the *Stage*? And are those fit to correct the Church that are not fit to come into it? Besides, what makes them fly out upon the

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the *Function*; and rail by wholesale? Is the *Priesthood* a Crime, and the Service of God a Disadvantage? I grant Persons and Things are not always suited. A good *Post* may be ill kept, but then the Centure should keep close to the Fault, and the Office not suffer for the Manager. The *Clergy* may have their Failings sometimes like others, but what then? The *Character* is still untarnish'd. The *Men* may be Little, but the *Priests* are not so. And therefore like other People, they ought to be treated by their best Distinction.

If 'tis Objected that the *Clergy* in *Plays* are commonly *Chaplains*, And that these *Belonging* to Persons of Quality they were obliged to represent them servile and submissive. To this I Answer,

1st. In my former Remark, that the *Stage* often outrages the whole *Order*, without regard to any particular Office. But were it not so, in the

2^d. Place, They quite overlook the Character, and mistake the Business of *Chaplains*. They are no *Servants*, neither do they *Belong* to any *Body*, but God Almighty. *Moral Essays.* This Point I have fully proved in another *Treatise*, and thither I refer the Reader.

C H A P. IV.

The Stage-Poets make their Principal Persons Vicious, and reward them at the End of the Play.

THE Lines of Virtue and Vice are Struck out by Nature in very Legible Distinctions; They tend to a different Point, and in the greater Instances the Space between them is easily perceiv'd. Nothing can be more unlike than the Original Forms of these Qualities; The First has all the Sweetness, Charms, and Graces imaginable; The other has the Air of a *Post* ill Carved into a *Monster*, and looks both Foolish and Frightful together. These are the Native Appearances of Good and Evil: And they that endeavour to Blot the Distinctions to Rub out the Colours, or Change the Marks, are extremely to blame. 'Tis confessed as long as the Mind is awake, and Conscience goes true, there's no Fear of being imposed on. But when Vice is Varnish'd over with Pleasure, and comes in the Shape of Convenience, the Case grows somewhat dangerous; for then
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the Fancy may be gain'd, and the Guards corrupted, and Reason suborn'd against it self. And thus a *Disguise* often passes when the Person would otherwise be stop'd. To put *Lewdness* into a Thriving Condition, to give it an Equipage of Quality, and to treat it with Ceremony and Respect is the way to confound the Understanding, to fortifie the Charm, and to make the Mischief invincible. Innocence is often owing to Fear, and Appetite is kept under by Shame; But when these Restraints are once taken off, when Profit and Liberty lie on the same side, and a Man can Debauch himself into Credit, what can be expected in such a Case, but that Pleasure should grow absolute, and Madness carry all before it? The *Stage* seems eager to bring Matters to this Issue; They have made a considerable Progress, and are still pushing their Point with all the Vigour imaginable. If this be not their Aim why is *Lewdness* so much consider'd in Character and Success? Why are their Favourites Atheistical, and their fine Gentlemen debauched? To what purpose is *Vice* thus prefer'd, thus ornamented, and carress'd, unless for Imitation? That Matter of Fact stands thus, I shall make good by several Instances. To begin then with their Men of Breeding and Figure.

Figure. *Wild-Blood* sets up for *Debauchery*, *Ridicules* Marriage, and Swears by *Mahomet*. *Bellamy* makes sport with the Devil, and *Lorenzo* is vicious and calls his Father *Bawdy Magistrate*. *Horner* is horridly *Smutty*, and *Harcourt* false to his Friend who used him kindly. In the *Plain Dealer* *Freeman* talks coarsely, Cheats the Widow, *Debauches* her Son, and makes him undutiful. *Bellmour* is Lewd and Profane, and *Mellefont* puts *Careless* in the best way he can to *Debauch Lady Plyant*. These *Sparks* generally Marry the Top-Ladies, and those that do not, are brought to no Penance, but go off with the Character of Fine Gentlemen: In *Don Sebastian*, *Antonio* an Atheistical Bully is rewarded with the Lady *Moraima*, and half the *Mufti's* Estate. *Valentine* in *Love for Love* is (if I may so call him) the Hero of the Play; this Spark the Poet would pass for a Person of Virtue, but he speaks too late. 'Tis true, He was hearty in his Affection to *Angelica*. Now without Question, to be in Love with a fine Lady of Thirty Thousand Pounds is a great Virtue! But then abating this single Commendation, *Valentine* is altogether compounded of Vice. He is a prodigal *Debauchee*, *Unnatural* and *Profane*, *Obscene*, *Sawcy*, and *Undutiful*; And yet this *Libertine*

Mock A-
strol. p. 3.
&c.

Mock A-
strol. p. 57.
59.

Spanish
Fryar. p.
61.

Country
Wife. p. 25.

Old Batch.
Double.
Dealer. p.
34.

Love for
Love. p. 90.

Love for
Love. p. 6,
7, 25, 61,
89, 91.

bertine is crown'd for the Man of Merit, has his Wishes thrown into his Lap, and makes the Happy *Exit*. I perceive we should have a rare Set of *Virtues* if these *Poets* had the making of them! How they hug a Vitious Character, and how profuse are they in their Liberalities to Lewdness? In the *Provok'd Wife* Constant Swears at Length, solicits Lady Brute, Confesses himself Lewd, and prefers Debauchery to Marriage. He handles the last Subject very notably and worth the Hearing. *There is* (says he) *a poor sordid Slavery in Marriage, that turns the flowing Tide of Honour, and sinks it to the lowest ebb of Infamy. 'Tis a Corrupted Soil, Ill Nature, Avarice, Sloath, Cowardise, and Dirt, are all its Product-----* But then Constancy (*alias Whoring*) is a Brave, Free, Haughty, Generous Agent. This is admirable stuff both for the Rhetorick and the Reason! The Character of *Young Fashion* in the *Relapse* is of the same Stauchness, but this the Reader may have in another Place. p. 35.

To sum up the Evidence. A fine Gentleman, is a fine Whoring, Swearing, Smutty, Atheistical Man. These Qualifications it seems compleat the Idea of Honour. They are the Top-Improvements of Fortune, and the distinguishing Glories of Birth and Breeding! This is
the

the *Stage-Test* for *Quality*, and those that can't stand it, ought to be *Disclaim'd*. The Restraints of Conscience and the Pedantry of Virtue, are unbecoming a Cavalier: Future Securities, and Reaching beyond Life, are vulgar Provisions: If he falls a-Thinking at this rate, he forfeits his Honour; For his Head was only made to run against a Post! Here you have a Man of Breeding and Figure, that burlesques the *Bible*, Swears, and talks Smut to Ladies, speaks ill of his Friend behind his Back, and betrays his Interest. A fine Gentleman that has neither Honesty, nor Honour, Conscience, nor Manners, Good Nature, nor civil Hypocrisie: Fine, only in the Insignificancy of Life, the Abuse of Religion, and the Scandals of Conversation. These Worshipful Things are the *Poor's* Favourites: They appear at the Head of the *Fashion*; and shine in Character, and Equipage. If there is any Sense stirring, They must have it, tho' the rest of the *Stage* suffer never so much by the Partiality. And what can be the Meaning of this wretched Distribution of Honour? Is it not to give Credit and Countenance to Vice, and to shame young People out of all Pretences to Conscience, and Regularity? They seem forc'd to turn Lewd in their own Defence: They can't otherwise

Wise justify themselves to the Fashion, nor keep up the Character of Gentlemen: Thus People not well furnish'd with Thought, and Experience, are debauch'd both in Practice and Principle. And thus Religion grows uncreditable, and passes for ill Education. The Stage seldom gives Quarter to any Thing that's serviceable or Significant, but persecutes Worth, and Goodness under every Appearance. He that would be safe from their Satyr must take care to disguise himself in Vice, and hang out the Colours of Debauchery. How often is Learning Industry, and Frugality, ridiculed in Comedy? The rich Citizens are often Misers, and Cuckolds, and the Universities, Schools of Petulancy upon this Score. In short; Libertinism and Profaneness, Dressing, Idleness, and Gallantry, are the only valuable Qualities. As if People were not apt enough of themselves to be Lazy, Lewd and Extravagant, unless they were prick'd forward, and provok'd by Glory, and Reputation. Thus the Marks of Honour, and Infamy are misapplied, and the Idea's of Virtue and Vice confounded. Thus Monstrousness goes for Proportion, and the Blemishes of Human Nature, make up the Beauties of it.

See the Character of Charles in the School for Scandal, with his speech about The a pretty woman, and Sir Peter's about a Joseph Act 4. S.

Don Sebast.
Lovi for
Lovi p. 10.
Peyrak'd
Wife. p. 64.
Chap. 1.
& 2.

The fine Ladies are of the same Cut with the Gentlemen; *Moraine* is scandalously rude to her Father, helps him to a beating, and runs away with *Antonia*. *Angelica* talks saucily to her Uncle, and *Belinda* confesses her Inclination for a Gallant. And as I have observ'd already, the Topping Ladies in the *Mock Astrologer*, *Spanish Fryar*, *Country Wife*, *Old Batchelour*, *Orphan*, *Double Dealer*, and *Love Triumphant*, are Smutty, and sometimes Profane.

Mostel.
A. 1. 2.

Trinum.
A. 2. 1.

A. 2. 1.

Euch.
A. 3. 3.

Hecyr.
A. 3. 4.

And was Licentiousness and Irreligion, always a Mark of Honour? No; I don't perceive but that the old *Paeps* had an other Notion of Accomplishment, and bred their People of Condition a different way. *Philolaches* in *Plautus* laments his being debauch'd; and dilates upon the Advantages of Virtue, and Regularity. *Lusiteles* another Young Gentleman disputes handsomely by himself against Lewdness. And the Discourse between him and *Philito* is Moral, and well managed. And afterwards he lashes Luxury and Debauching with a great deal of Warmth, and Satyr. *Chremes* in *Terence* is a modest young Gentleman, he is afraid of being surpriz'd by *Thais*, and seems careful not to sully his Reputation. And *Pamphilus* in *Hecyra* resolves rather to be govern'd by Duty, than Inclination.

Plan-

Maledon in *Marcellus* A. 4. S. 3 speaks of his continence: This I have heard laugh'd at by the audience.

Plautus's *Pinnacium* tells her Friend *Panegyris*, that they ought to acquit themselves fairly to their Husbands, tho' These should fail in their Regards towards them. For all good People will do Justice tho' they don't receive it. Lady *Brute* in the *Provok'd Wife* is govern'd by different Maxims. She is debauch'd with ill Usage, says *Virtue is an Ass*, and a *Gallant's worth forty on's*. *Pinnacium* goes on to another Head of Duty, and declares that a Daughter can never respect her Father too much, and that Disobedience has a great deal of Scandal, and Lewdness in't. The Lady *Jacinta* as I remember does not treat her Father at this rate of Decency. Let us hear a little of her Behaviour. The *Mock Astrologer* makes the Men draw, and frights the Ladies with the Apprehension of a Quarrel. Upon this; *Theodosia* crys what will become of us! *Jacinta* answers, we'll die for Company: nothing vexes me but that I am not a Man, to have one thrust at that malicious old Father of mine, before I go. p. 60. Afterwards the old Gentleman *Alonzo* threaten's his Daughters with a Nunnery *Jacinta* spurs again and says, I would have thee to know thou graceless old Man, that I defy a Nunnery: name a Nunnery once more and I disown thee for my Father. I could carry on the Comparison between the old

Stich. A.
1. 1.

p. 3.

Stich. A.
1. 2.

Ibid.

and Modern Poets somewhat farther. But this may suffice.

Thus we see what a fine time Lewd People have on the *English Stage*. No Censure, no mark of Infamy, no Mortification must touch them. They keep their Honour untarnish'd, and carry off the Advantage of their Character. They are set up for the Standard of Behaviour, and the Masters of Ceremony and Sense. And at last that the Example may work the better, they generally make them Rich, and Happy, and reward them with their own Desires.

Mr. Dryden in the *Preface* to his *Mock-Astrologer*, confesses himself blamed for this Practice. *For making debauch'd Persons his Protagonists, or chief Persons of the Drama; And for making them happy in the Conclusion of the Play, against the Law of Comedy, which is to reward Virtue, and punish Vice.* To this Objection He makes a lame Defence. And answers

1st. *That he knows no such Law constantly observ'd in Comedy by the Ancient or Modern Poets.* What then? *Poets* are not always exactly in Rule. It may be a good Law tho' 'tis not constantly observ'd; some Laws are constantly broken, and yet ne're the worse for all that. He goes on, and pleads the Authorities of *Plautus*, and
Terence.

Terence. I grant there are Instances of Favour to vicious young People in these Authors, but to this I reply

1st. That those *Poets* had a greater compass of Liberty in their Religion. Debauchery did not lie under those Discouragements of Scandal, and Penalty, with them as it does with us. Unless therefore He can prove *Heathenism*, and *Christianity* the same, his *Precedents* will do him little service.

2^{ly}. *Horace* who was as good a Judge of the *Stage*, as either of those *Comedians*, seems to be of another Opinion. He condemns the Obscenities of *Plautus*, and tells you, Men of Fortune and Quality in his time, would not endure immodest Satyr. *De Art. Poet.* He continues, that Poets were formerly admired for the great Services they did. For teaching Matters relating to Religion, and Government; For refining the Manners, tempering the Passions, and improving the Understandings of Mankind. For making them more useful in Domestick Relations, and the publick Capacities of Life. *Ibid.*

This is a demonstration that Vice was not the Inclination of the Muses in those Days; and that *Horace* believ'd the chief Business of a Poem was, to Instruct the Audience. He adds farther that the *Chorus* ought to turn upon the Argument of the *Drama*, and support the Design of the *Acts*. That

They ought to speak in Defence of Virtue, and Frugality, and shew a Regard to Religion. Now from the Rule of the *Chorus*, we may conclude his Judgment for the *Play*. For as he observes, there must be a Uniformity between the *Chorus* and the *Acts*: They must have the same View, and be all of a Piece. From hence 'tis plain that *Horace* would have no Immoral Characters have either Countenance or good Fortune, upon the *Stage*. If 'tis said the very mention of the *Chorus* shews the Directions were intended for *Tragedy*. To this.

I answer, That the Consequence is not good. For the use of a *Chorus* is not inconsistent with *Comedy*. The ancient *Comedians* had it. *Aristophanes* is an Instance. I know 'tis said the *Chorus* was left out in that they call the *New Comedy*. But I can't see the conclusiveness of this Assertion. For *Aristophanes* his *Plutus* is *New Comedy* with a *Chorus* in't. And *Aristotle* who lived after this Revolution of the *Stage*, mentions nothing of the Omission of the *Chorus*. He rather supposes its continuance by saying the *Chorus* was added by the Government long after the Invention of *Comedy*. 'Tis true *Plautus* and *Terence* have none, but those before them probably might. *Moliere* has now reviv'd them; And

Vid. Schol.

Libr. de

Post. sup. 5.

Chorus

Esseba.

And *Horace* might be of his Opinion, for ought we know to the contrary.

Lastly, *Horace* having expressly mention'd the beginning and progress of Comedy, discovers himself more fully: He advises a Poet to form his Work upon the Precepts of *Socrates* and *Plato*, and the Models of Moral Philosophy. This was the way to preserve Decency, and to assign a proper Fate and Behaviour to every Character. Now if *Horace* would have his Poet govern'd by the Maxims of Morality, he must oblige him to Sobriety of Conduct, and a just distribution of Rewards, and Punishments.

Ibid.

Mr. Dryden makes *Homewards*, and endeavours to fortifie himself in Modern Authority. He lets us know that *Ben Johnson* after whom he may be proud to Err, gives him more than one Example of this Conduct; That in the *Alchymist* is notorious, where neither *Face* nor his Master are corrected according to their Demerits. But how Proud soever *Mr. Dryden* may be of an Errour, he has not so much of *Ben Johnson's* company as he pretends. His Instance of *Face*, &c. In the *Alchymist* is rather notorious against his Purpose than for it.

*Prof. Mock.
Astrol.*

For *Face* did not Counsel his Master *Lovewit* to debauch the Widow; neither

is it clear that the Matter went thus far. He might gain her consent upon Terms of Honour for ought appears to the contrary. 'Tis true, *Face* who was one of the Principal Cheats is Pardon'd and Consider'd: But then his Master confesses himself kind to a Fault. He owns this Indulgence was a Breach of Justice, and unbecoming the Gravity of an old Man. And then desires the Audience to excuse him upon the Score of the Temptation. But *Face* continued in the Couzenage till the

ibid. last without Repentance. Under Favour I conceive this is a Mistake. For does not *Face* make an *Apology* before he leaves the *Stage*? Does he not set himself at the Bar, arraign his own Practice, and cast the Cause upon the Clemency of the Company? And are not all these Signs of the Dislike of what he had done? Thus careful the *Poet* is to prevent the Ill Impressions of his *Play*! He brings both Man and Master to Confession. He dismisses them like Malefactors; And moves for their Pardon before he gives them their Discharge. But the *Mock-Astrologer* has a gentler Hand: *Wild-Blood* and *Jacinta* are more generously used: There is no Acknowledgment exacted; no Hardship put upon them: They are permitted to talk on in their Libertine way to the

the Last : and take Leave without the least Appearance of Reformation. The Mock-Astrologer urges Ben Johnson's Silent Woman as an other Precedent to his Purpose. For there Dauphine confesses himself in Love with all the Collegiate Ladies. And yet this naughty Dauphine is Crowned in the End with the Possession of his Uncle's Estate, and with the Hopes of all his Mistresses. This Charge, as I take it, is somewhat too severe. I grant Dauphine Professes himself in Love with the Collegiate Ladies at first. But when they invited him to a private Visit, he makes them no Promise ; but rather appears tired, and willing to disengage. Dauphin therefore is not altogether so naughty as this Author represents him.

Ibid.

Ben Johnson's Fax is clearly against Mr. Dryden. And here I have his own Confession for Proof. He declares the Poet's End in this Play was the Punishment of Vice, and the Reward of Virtue. Ben was forced to strain for this piece of Justice, and break through the Unity of Design. This Mr. Dryden remarks upon him. However he is pleased to commend the Performance, and calls it an excellent Fifth Act.

Essay of
Drama-
tick Poetry.
p. 28.

Ben Johnson shall speak for himself afterwards in the Character of a Critick ;
In

In the mean time I shall take a Testimony or two from *Shakespear*. And here we may observe the admir'd *Falstaffe* goes off in Disappointment. He is thrown out of Favour as being a *Rake*, and dies like a Rat behind the Hangings. The Pleasure he had given, would not excuse him. The Poet was not so partial, as to let his Humour compound for his Lewdness. If 'tis objected that this Remark is wide of the Point, because *Falstaffe* is represented in Tragedy, where the Laws of Justice are more strictly observ'd. To this I answer, that you may call *Henry* the Fourth and Fifth, Tragedies if you please. But for all that, *Falstaffe* wears no *Buskins*, his Character is perfectly Comical from end to end.

The London Prodigal.

The next Instance shall be in *Flowerdale* the *Prodigal*. This Spark notwithstanding his Extravagance, makes a lucky Hand on't at last, and marries a rich Lady. But then the Poet qualifies him for his good Fortune, and mends his Manners with his Circumstances. He makes him Repent, and leave off his Intemperance, Swearing, &c. And when his Father warn'd him against a Relapse, He answers very soberly,

Heav'n helping me I'll hate the Course of Hell.

I could give some Instances of this kind out of Beaumont and Fletcher, But there's no need of any farther Quotation; For Mr. Dryden is not satisfied with his Apology from Authority: He does as good as own that this may be construed no better than defending one ill Practice by another. To prevent this very reasonable Objection he endeavours to vindicate his *Precedents* from the Reason of the Thing. To this purpose he makes a wide difference between the Rules of Tragedy and Comedy. That Vice must be impartially prosecuted in the first, because the Persons are Great, &c.

It seems then Executions are only for Greatness and Quality. Justice is not to strike much lower than a Prince. Private People may do what they please. They are too few for Mischief, and too little for Punishment! This would be admirable Doctrine for Newgate, and give us a general Goal-Delivery without more ado. But in Tragedy (says the Mock-Astrologer.) The Crimes are likewise Horrid, so that there is a necessity for Severity and Example. And how stands the matter in Comedy? Quite otherwise. There the Faults are but the sallies of Youth, *ibid.* and the Frailties of Human Nature. For Instance. There is nothing but a little Whoring, Pimping, Gaming, Profaneness, &c. And who could be so hard-hearted

ibid.

ibid.

to give a Man any Trouble for This ? Such Rigours would be strangely Inhumane ! A Poet is a better natur'd Thing. I can assure you. These little Miscarriages move Pity and Commiseration, and are not such as must of necessity be Punish'd. This is comfortable Casuistry ! But to be Serious. Is Dissolution of Manners such a Peccadillo ? Does a Profligate Conscience deserve nothing but Commiseration ? And are People damn'd only for *Humane Frailties* ? I perceive the Laws of Religion and those of the Stage differ extremely ! The strength of his Defence lies in this choice Maxim, that the *Chief End of Comedy is Delight*. He questions whether *Instruction has anything to do in Comedy* ; If it has, he is sure 'tis no more than it's *secondary end* : For the business of the Poet is to make you laugh. Granting the Truth of this Principle, I somewhat question the Serviceableness of it. For is there no Diversion to be had unless Vice appears prosperous, and rides at the Head of Success ? One would think such a preposterous distribution of Rewards, should rather shock the Reason, and raise the Indignation of the Audience. To laugh without Reason is the Pleasure of Fools, and against it, of something worse. The exposing of Knavery, and making *Lewdness* ridiculous, is a much

much better occasion for Laughter. And this with submission I take to be the End of *Comedy*. And therefore it does not differ from *Tragedy* in the End, but in the *Means*. Instruction is the principal Design of both. The one works by Terror, the other by Infamy. 'Tis true, they don't move in the same Line, but they meet in the same Point at last. For this Opinion I have good Authority, besides what has been cited already.

1st. Monsieur *Rapin* affirms, 'That Delight is the End that Poetry aims at, but not the Principal one. For Poetry being an Art, ought to be profitable by the quality of it's own nature, and by the Essential Subordination that all Arts should have to Polity, whose End in General is the publick Good: This is the Judgment of *Aristotle* and of *Horace* his chief Interpreter. *Ben Johnson* in his Dedictory Epistle of his *Fox* has somewhat considerable upon this Argument; And declaims with a great deal of Zeal, Spirit, and good Sense, against the Licentiousness of the *Stage*. He lays it down for a Principle, 'That 'tis impossible to be a good Poet without being a good *Man*. That he (a good Poet) is said to be able to inform young Men to all good Discipline, and enflame grown Men to all great Virtues, &c.----- That the general complaint was that the *Writers* of those days had nothing

Immorality Encouraged

' thing remaining in them of the Dignity
 ' of a Poet, but the abused Name. That
 ' now, especially in Stage-Poetry, nothing
 ' but Ribaldry, Profanation, *Blasphemy*, all
 ' Licence of Offence to God and Man, is
 ' practised. He confesses a great part of
 ' this Charge is over-true, and is sorry he
 ' dares not deny it. But then he hopes all
 ' are not embark'd in this bold Adventure
 ' for Hell. For my part (says he) I can;
 ' and from a most clear Conscience affirm;
 ' That I have ever trembled to think to-
 ' wards the least Profaneness, and loath'd
 ' the Use of such foul, and unwash'd Baw-
 ' dry, as is now made the Food of the *Scene*.
 ' ——— The encrease of which Lust in Liber-
 ' ty, what Learned or Liberal Soul does not
 ' abhor? In whole *Enterludes* nothing but
 ' the Filth of the Time is utter'd—with
 ' Brothelry able to violate the Ear of a *Pa-*
 ' *gan*, and Blasphemy, to turn the Blood of
 ' a Christian to Water. He continues,
 ' that the Insolence of these Men had
 ' brought the *Muses* into Disgrace, and
 ' made *Poetry* the lowest scorn of the Age.
 ' He appeals to his Patrons the *Universities*,
 ' that his Labour has been heretofore, and
 ' mostly in this his latest Work, to reduce
 ' not only the ancient Forms, but Manners
 ' of the *Scene*, the Innocence, and the Do-
 ' ctrine, which is the Principal End of Poe-
 ' try;

‘sy, to inform Men in the best Reason of
 ‘Living. Lastly he adds, ‘that he has imi-
 ‘tated the Conduct of the Antients in this
 ‘Play, The goings out (or Conclusions) of
 ‘whose *Comedies*, were not always joy-
 ‘ful but oft-times the Bawds, the Slaves,
 ‘the Rivals, yea, and the Masters are
 ‘Muffled, and fitly, it being the Office of
 ‘a *Comick Poet* (mark that!) to imitate
 ‘Justice and Instruct to Life, &c. Say you
 ‘so! Why then if *Ben Johnson* knew any
 ‘thing of the Matter, Divertisement and
 ‘Laughing is not as Mr. *Dryden* affirms, the
 ‘Chief End of *Comedy*. This Testimony is
 ‘so very full and clear, that it needs no ex-
 ‘plaining, nor any enforcement from Rea-
 ‘soning, and Consequence.

And because Laughing and Pleasure has
 ‘such an unlimited Prerogative upon the
 ‘Stage, I shall add a Citation or two from
 ‘*Aristotle* concerning this Matter. Now
 ‘this great Man, ‘calls those Buffoons, and
 ‘Impertinents, who rally without any re-
 ‘gard to Persons or Things, to Decency
 ‘or good Manners. That there is a great
 ‘difference between Ribaldry, and hand-
 ‘som Rallying. He that would perform
 ‘exactly must keep within the Character
 ‘of Virtue and Breeding. He goes on,
 ‘and tells us that the old Comedians enter-
 ‘tain’d the Audience with Smut, but the
 ‘Modern

' Modern ones avoided that Liberty, and
 ' grew more reserv'd. This latter way he
 ' says was much more proper and Gentle
 ' than the other. That in his Opinion
 ' Rallying, no less than Railing, ought to
 ' be under the Discipline of Law; That
 ' he who is ridden by his *Jests*, and minds
 ' nothing but the Business of *Laughing*, is
 ' himself Ridiculous. And that a Man of
 ' Education and Sense, is so far from going
 ' these Lengths that he wont so much as
 ' endure the hearing some sort of Buf-
 ' foonry.

Lib. 4. de

Blorib. cap.

14.

And as to the point of Delight in ge-
 neral, the same Author affirms, ' That
 ' scandalous Satisfactions are not properly
 ' Pleasures. 'Tis only Distemper, and false
 ' Appetite which makes them Palatable.
 ' And a Man that is Sick, seldom has his
 ' Taste true. Besides, supposing we throw
 ' Capacity out of the Question, and make
 ' Experiment and Sensation the Judge;
 ' Granting this, we ought not to chop
 ' at every Bait, nor Fly out at every
 ' Thing that strikes the Fancy. The meer
 ' Agreeableness must not over-bear us,
 ' without distinguishing upon the Quality,
 ' and the Means. Pleasure how charming
 ' soever, must not be fetched out of Vice.
 ' An Estate is a pretty Thing; but if we
 ' purchase by Falshood, and Knavery,
 ' we

'Knavery, we pay too much for't. Some
 'Pleasures are Childish, and others abo-
 'minable; And upon the whole, pleasure, *Dr. Mor-*
 'absolutely speaking, is no good Thing. *Lib. 10.*
 And so much for the Philosopher. And *cap. 2.*
 because *Ribaldry* is used for Sport, a pas-
 sage or two from *Quintilian*, may not be
 unseasonable. This Orator does not only
 Condemn the grosser Instances, but cuts
 off all the *Double-Entendee's* at a Blow.
 He comes up to the Regularity of Thought,
 and tells us that the Meaning, as well as
 the 'Words of Discourse must be unfulli-
 'ed. And in the same Chapter he adds that *Institut.*
 'A Man of Probity has always a Reserve *Lib. 6. c.*
 'in his Freedoms, and Converſes within
 'the Rules of Modesty, and Character.
 'And that Mirth at the expence of Vir-
 'tue, is an Over-purchase, *Nisium enim*
risus pretium est si probitatis impendio con-
stat.

Thus we see how these great Masters
 qualify Diversion, and tie it up to *Pro-*
visoes, and Conditions. Indeed to make
Delight the main business of Comedy is an
 unreasonable and dangerous Principle: It
 opens the way to all Licentiousness, and
 Confounds the distinction between Mirth,
 and Madness. For if Diversion is the
Chief End, it must be had at any Price.
 No serviceable Expedient must be refused,
 M tho'

the never so scandalous. And thus the worst Things are said, and the best abus'd; Religion is insulted, and the most serious Matters turn'd into Ridicule! As if the Blind side of an Audience ought to be caress'd, and their Folly and Atheism entertain'd in the first Place. Yes, if the Palate is pleas'd, no matter tho' the Body is Poyson'd! For can one die of an easier Disease than Diversion? But Raillery apart, certainly Mirth and Laughter without respect to the Cause, are not such supreme Satisfaction! A Man has sometimes Pleasure in losing his Wits. Frenzy, and Possession, will shake the Lungs, and brighten the Face; and yet I suppose they are not much to be coveted. However, now we know the Reason of the Profaneness, and Obscenity of the Stage, of their Hellish Cursing and Swearing, and in short of their great Industry to make God, and Goodness Contemptible: 'Tis all to Satisfie the Company, and make People Laugh! A most admirable Justification! What can be more engaging to an Audience, than to see a Poet thus Atheistically brave? To see him Charge up to the Canons Mouth, and defy the Vengeance of Heaven to serve them? Besides, there may be somewhat of Convenience in the Case. To fetch Diversion out of

In-

Innocence is no such easy matter. There's no succeeding it may be in this method, without Sweat, and Drudging. Clean Wit, inoffensive Humour, and handfom Contrivance, require Time, and Thought. And who would be at this Expence, when the Purchase is so cheap another way? 'Tis possible a *Poet* may not always have Sense enough by him for such an Occasion. And since we are upon supposals, it may be the *Audience* is not to be gain'd without straining a Point, and giving a Loose to Conscience; and when People are sick, are they not to be Humour'd? In fine, we must makethem Laugh, right or wrong, for *Delight* is the *Chief End of Comedy*. *Delight*! He should have said *Debauchery*. That's the *English* of the Word, and the Consequence of the Practice. But the Original Design of *Comedy* was otherwise. And granting 'twas not so, what then? If the *Ends* of Things are naught, they must be mended. Mischiefs the Chief end of Malice, would it be then a Blemish in Ill-Nature to change Temper, and relent into Goodness? The Chief *End* of a Madman it may be is to Fire a House, must we not therefore bind him in his Bed? To conclude. If *Delight* without Restraint, or Distinction, without Conscience or Shame, is the Su-

pream Law of Comedy, 'twere well if we had less on't. Arbitrary Pleasure, is more dangerous than Arbitrary Power. Nothing is more Brutal than to be abandon'd to Appetite; And nothing more wretched than to serve in such a Design. The *Mock Astrologer* to clear himself of this Imputation, is glad to give up his Principle at Last. *Lest any Man should think (says he) that I write this to make Libertinism amiable, or that I cared not to debase the End, and Institution of Comedy.* (It seems then *Delight* is not the Chief End.) *I must farther declare that we make not Vicious Persons Happy, but only as Heaven makes Sinners so, &c.* If this will hold, all's well. But *Heaven* does not forgive without Repentance. Let us see then what Satisfaction he requires from his *Wild-Blood*, and what Discipline he puts him under. Why, He helps him to his Mistress, he Marries him to a Lady of Birth and Fortune. And now do you think He has not made him an Example, and punish'd him to some Purpose! These are frightful Severities! Who would be vicious when such Terrors hang over his Head? And does *Heaven* make Sinners happy upon these Conditions? Sure some People have a good Opinion of Vice, or a very ill one of Marriage, otherwise they would

would have charged the Penance a little more. But I have nothing farther with the *Mock-Astrologer*.

And now for the Conclusion of a *Chapter*, I shall give some Instances of the *Manners* of the *Stage*, and that with respect to Poetry, and Ceremony. *Manners* in the Language of Poetry, is a Propriety of Actions, and Persons. To succeed in this Business, there must always be a regard had to Age, Sex, and Condition : And nothing put into the Mouths of Persons which disagrees with any of these Circumstances. 'Tis not enough to say a witty Thing, unless it be spoken by a likely Person, and upon a proper Occasion. But my Design will lead me to this Subject afterwards, and therefore I shall say no more of it at present, but proceed to apply the Remark.

One Instance of Impropriety in *Manners* both Poetical and Moral, is their making Women, and Women of Quality talk Smuttily. This I have proved upon them already, and could cite many more places to the same purpose were it necessary.

But I shall go on, and give the Reader some other Examples of Decency, Judgment, and Probability. *Don-Sebastian* will help us in some Measure. Here

p. 85.

the *Musli* makes a foolish Speech to the Rabble, and jests upon his own Religion. He tells them, *tho' your Tyrant is a Lawful Emperour, yet your Lawful Emperour is but a Tyrant, — That your Emperour is a Tyrant is most Manifest, for you were born to be Turks, but he has play'd the Turk with you.* And now is not this Man fit to Manage the *Alcoran*, and to be set up for an Oracle of State? *Captain Tam* should have had this Speech by right: But the *Poet* had a farther Design, and any thing is good enough for a *Musli*.

p. 129.

Sebastián after all the Violence of his Repentance, his grasping at self Murther, and Resolutions for the Cell, is strangely pleased with the Remembrance of his *Incest*, and wishes the Repetition of it: And *Almeida* out of her Princely Modesty, and singular Compunction, is of the same Mind. This is somewhat surprising! *Oedipus* and *Jocasta* in *Sophocles* don't Repent at this rate.⁺ No: The horror of the first Discovery continues upon their Spirits: They never relapse into any fits of Intemperance, nor entertain themselves with a lewd Memory. This sort of Behaviour is not only more Instructive but more Natural too. It being very unlikely one should wish the repeating a Crime, when He was almost Distracted

+ As the Counselor in the *Myobrian* Mother at

at the thoughts on't; At the thoughts on't;
tho' 'twas committed under all the Circum-
stances of Excuse. Now when Ignorance
and meer Mistake are so very disquieting,
'tis very strange if a Man should plague
his Mind with the Aggravations of Know-
ledge; To carry Aversion, and Desire, in
their full strength upon the same Object;
To fly and pursue with so much Eagerness,
is somewhat unusual. p. 32.

If we step to the *Spanish Fryar* He will
afford us a Flight worth the observing.
'Tis part of the Addresses of *Torrismond* to
Leonora.

You are so Beautiful
So wondrous Fair, you justify Rebellion;
As if that faultless Face could make no Sin,
But Heaven by looking on it must forgive.

These are strange Complements! *Tor-
rismond* calls his Queen Rebel to her Head,
when he was both her General and her
Lover. This is powerful Rhetorick to
Court a Queen with! Enough one would
think to have made the Affair desperate;
But he has a Remedy at Hand. The
Poet's Nastrum of Profaneness cures all.
He does as good as tell Her, she may Sin
as much as she has a Mind to. Her Face
is a Protection to her Conscience. For

Heaven is under a necessity to forgive a Handsom Woman. To say all this ought to be pass'd over in *Torridsmo* on the score of his Passion, is to make the Excuse more scandalous than the Fault, if possible. Such Raptures are fit only for *Bedlam*, or a place which I shan't Name. *Love Triumphant* will furnish another Rant not altogether inconsiderable. Here *Celindea* a Maiden Lady, when she was afraid her Spark would be married to another, calls out presently for a *Chaos*. She is for pulling the World about her Ears, tumbling all the Elements together, and Expostulates with Heaven for making Humane Nature otherwise than it should have been.

p. 52.

Great Nature break thy chain that links together

*The Fabrick of this Globe, and make a Chaos,
Like that within my Soul.—*

Now to my fancy, if she had call'd for a *Chair* instead of a *Chaos*, trip'd off, and kept her folly to her self, the Woman had been much wiser. And since we have shown our Skill in vaulting on the High-Ropes, a little *Tumbling* on the *Stage*, may not do amiss for variety.

*Spanish
Prayer.]*
p. 36.

Now then for a jest or two. *Don Gomez* shall begin: And here he'll give us

a Gingle upon the double meaning of a Word.

I think, says Demipick the Fryar, it was my good Angel that sent me hither so opportunely. Gomez suspects him brib'd for no creditable Business, and Answers,

Gom. Ay, whose good Angels sent you hither, that you know best Father.

These Spaniards will entertain us with more of this Fine Raillery. Colonel Sancho in *Love Triumphant* has a great stroak at it. He says his Bride *Dalinda* is no more *Dalinda*, but *Dalilah* the *Philistine*. p. 70.

This Colonel as great a Soldier as he is, is quite puzzled at a Herald. He thinks they call him Herod, or some such Jewish Name. Here you have a good Officer spoil'd for p. 61. a miserable jest. And yet after all, this

Sancho tho' he can't pronounce Herald, knows what 'tis to be *Laconick*, which is somewhat more out of his way. *Thraso* in *Terence* was a Man of the same size in Enuch. Sense, but for all that he does not quibble.

Albanact Captain of the Guards, is much King Arth. p. 2. about as witty as Sancho. It seems

Emmeline Heiress to the Duke of Cornwall was Blind. *Albanact* takes the rise of his Thought from hence; And observes that as Blind as she is, *Coswald* would have no blind Bargain of her. *Carlos* tells Sancho he is sure of his Mistress, and has no more Love Trium. p. 26. to do but to take out a License, San-

Sancho replies, *Indeed, I have her License for it. Carlos* is somewhat angry at this Gingle, and cries, *what quibbling too in your Prosperity?* Adversity it seems is the only time for punning. Truly I think so too. For 'tis a sign a Man is much Distress'd when he lies to such an Expedient. However, *Carlos* needed not to have been so touchy: For he can stoop as low himself upon occasion. We must know then that *Sancho* had made himself a Hunch'd Back, to counterfeit the *Conde Alonzo*. The two Colonels being in the same Disguise, were just upon the Edge of a Quarrel. After some Preliminaries in Railing, *Sancho* cries, *Don't provoke me; I am mischievously bent.*

Carlos replies, *Nay, you are Bent enough in Conscience, but I have a Bent Fist for Boxing.* Here you have a Brace of Quibbles started in a Line and a Half. And which is worst of all, they come from *Carlos*, from a Character of Sense; and therefore the Poet, not the Soldier, must answer for them.

I shall now give the Reader a few Instances of the Courtship of the Stage, and how decently they treat the Women, and Quality of both Sexes. The Women who are secured from Affronts by Custom, and have a Privilege for Respect, are sometimes

times but roughly saluted by these Men of Address. And to bar the Defence, this Coarseness does not always come from Clowns, and Women-haters; but from Persons of Figure, neither singular, nor ill-Bred. And which is still worse, The Satyr falls on blindly without Distinction, and strikes at the whole Sex.

Enter Raymond a Noble-man in the Spanish Fryar. p. 47.

O Virtue! Virtue! What art thou become?
That men should leave thee for that Toy a woman,
Made from the Drofs and Refuse of a Man;
Heaven took him sleeping when he made her too,
Had Man been waking he had ne'er consented.

I did not know before that a Man's Drofs lay in his Rib; I believe sometimes it lies higher. But the Philosophy, the Religion, and the Ceremony of these Lines, are too tender to be touched. *Creon* a *Oedip.* p. 3. Prince in *Oedipus*, rails in General at the Sex, and at the same time is violently in Love with *Euridice*. This upon the matter, is just as natural, as 'tis Civil. If any one would understand what the Curse of all tender hearted Women is, *Belmour* will inform him. What is it then? 'Tis the *Pox*. If this be true, the Women had need lay in a stock of ill Nature betimes.

It

It seems 'tis their only preservative. It guards their Virtue, and their Health, and is all they have to trust to. Sharper another Man of Sense in this Play, talks much at the same rate. Belinda would know of him where he got that excellent Talent of Railing?

p. 35. Sharp. Madam the Talent was Born with me. ——— I confess I have taken care to improve it, to qualifie me for the Society of Ladies. Horner, a Topping Character in the Country Wife, is advised to avoid Women, and hate them as they do him. He Answers.

p. 21. Because I do hate them, and would hate them yet more, I'll frequent e'm; you may see by Marriage, nothing makes a Man hate a Woman more than her Constant Conversation. There is still something more Coarse upon the Sex spoken by Dorax, but it is a priviledged Expression, and as such I must leave it. The Relapse mends the Contrivance of the Satyr, refines upon the manner, and to make the Discourse the more probable, obliges the Ladies to abuse themselves. And because I should be loath to tire the Reader, Berinthia shall close the Argument. This Lady having undertook the Employment of a Procuress, makes this Remark upon it to her self.

Don Sebast.

p. 5.

Berinth.

Epilogue to *Bartholin's Discourse*
 School for Scandal.
 Some of *Bartholin's* sayings.
 Provoked Wife, and quoted in the
 Discourse.

Berinth. So here is fine Work! But there was no avoiding it. Besides, I begin to Fancy there may be as much Pleasure in carrying on another Badi's Intrigue, as ones own. This is at least certain, It exercises almost all the Entertaining Faculties of a Woman. For there is Employment for Hypocrisie, Invention, Deceit, Flattery, Mischief, and Lying.

Let us now see what Quarter the Stage gives to *Quality*. And here we shall find them extremely free, and familiar. They dress up the Lords in Nick-Names, and expose them in Characters of contempt. Lord Froth is explain'd a Solemn Coxcomb; And Lord Rake, and Lord Foplington give you their Talent in their Title. Lord Plausible in the Plain Dealer Acts a ridiculous Part, but is with all very civil. He tells Manly, he never attempted to abuse any Person. The other answers; What you were afraid? Manly goes on and declares, He would call a Rascal by no other Title, tho' his Father had left him a Duke's. That is, he would call a Duke a Rascal. This I confess is very much Plain Dealing. Such freedoms would appear but oddly in Life, especially without provocation. I must own the Poet to be an Author of good Sense; But under favour, these Jest, if we may call them so, are somewhat high sea-

Double Dealer.

Perfou.

Dram.

Relapse.

Provok'd

Wife.

173

season'd, the Humour seems overstrain'd, and the Character push'd too far. To proceed. *Mustapha* was selling *Don Alverez* for a Slave. The Merchant asks what Virtues he has. *Mustapha* replies, Virtues quoth ah! He is of a great Family and Rich, what other Virtues wouldst thou have in a Nobleman? *Don Carlos* in Love Triumphant stands for a Gentleman, and a Man of Sense, and outthrows *Mustapha* a Bar's Length. He tells us Nature has given *Sancho* an empty Noddle, *Don Fortune* in Revenge has fill'd his Pockets: just a Lords Estate in Land and Wit. This is a handsome Complement to the Nobility! And my Lord *Salisbury* had no doubt of it a good Bargain of the Dedication. *Teresa's* general description of a Countess is considerable in it's Kind: But only 'tis in no Condition to appear. In the Relapse, *Sir Tumbelly* who had mistaken Young Fashion for Lord *Foplington*, was afterwards deceiv'd; and before the surprize was quite over, puts the Question, is it then possible that this should be the true Lord *Foplington* at last? The Nobleman removes the scruple with great Civility and Discretion! Lord *Fopl.* Why what do you see in his Face to make you doubt of it? Sir without presuming to have an extraordinary Opinion of my Figure, give me leave to tell you, if you had seen

Don Sebast.
p. 16.

p. 17.

Don Quixote
part. 2.
p. 37.

seen as many Lords as I have done, you would not think it impossible a Person of a worse Taille then mine might be a Modern Man of Quality.

Relapſe.
p. 84.

I'm ſorry to hear Modern Quality degenerates ſo much. But by the way, theſe Liberties are altogether new. They are unpractiſed by the Latin Comedians, and by the *Engliſh* too till very lately, as the Plain Dealer obſerves. And as for Moliere in France, he pretends to fly his Satyr no higher than a Marquis.

L'Ombre
de Moliere.

And has our Stage a particular Privilege? Is their Charter enlarg'd, and are they on the ſame Foot of Freedom with the Slaves in the Saturnalia? Muſt all Men be handled alike? Muſt their Roughneſs be needs play'd upon Title? And can't they laſh the Vice without pointing upon the Quality? If as Mr. Dryden rightly defines it, a Play ought to be a juſt Image of Humane Nature; Why are not the Decencies of Life, and the Reſpects of Converſation obſerved? Why muſt the Cuſtoms of Countries be Croſs'd upon, and the Regards of Honour overlook'd? What neceſſity is there to kick the Coronets about the Stage, and to make a Man a Lord, only in order to make him a Coxcomb. I hope the Poets don't intend to revive the old Project of Levelling, and Vote down the Houſe of Peers.

Vice is worst
in the highest
Characters.

Essay
Dram. poet.
p. 5.

Peers. In earnest the *Play-House* is an admirable School of Behaviour! This is their way of managing Ceremony, distinguishing Degree, and entertaining the *Boxes*! But I shall leave them at present to the enjoyment of their Talent, and proceed to another Argument.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

*Remarks upon Amphytrion, King Arthur,
Don Quixot, and the Relapse.*

SECTION I.

THE following *Plays*, excepting the last, will fall under the same Heads of commendation with the former. However, since the *Poets* have here been prodigal in their Expence, and dress'd themselves with more Curiosity than ordinary, they deserve a proportionable Regard. So much Finery must not be Crowded, I shall therefore make Elbow-Room for their Figure, and allow them the compass of a distinct *Chapter*.

To begin with *Amphytrion*. In this *Play* Mr. Dryden represents *Jupiter* with the Attributes of the supreme Being: He furnishes him with Omnipotence, makes him the Creator of Nature, and the Arbit^{Amphy.}er of Fate; puts all the Functions of Pro^{p. 1, 2, 3,}vidence in his Hand, and describes him^{8, 9.} with the Majesty of the true God. And when he has put Him in this glorious

N Equi-

p. 8, 17.

Equipage, he brings him out for Diversi-
 on. He makes him express himself in
 the most intemperate Raptures: He is
 willing to *Renounce* his *Heaven* for his
 Brutality, and employ a whole *Eternity*
 in Lewdness. He draws his Debauch at its
 full Length, with all the Art, and Height-
 nings, and Foulness of Idea imaginable.
 This *Jupiter* is not contented with his suc-
 cess against *Amphytrion*, unless he brings
Alcmena into the Confederacy, and makes
 her a Party *ex post Facto*. He would not
 have her think of her *Husband*, but her
Lover, that is, her *Whoremaster*. 'Tis not
 the Success, but the manner of gaining it
 which is all in all. 'Tis the Vice which
 is the charming Circumstance. Innocence
 and Regularity, are dangerous Compani-
 ons; They spoil Satisfaction, and make
 every Thing insipid! Unless People take
 care to discharge their Virtue, and clear
 off their Conscience, their Senses will va-
 nish immediately! For *Jupiter*, says he,
 would *owe nothing to a Name so dull as Hus-
 band*. And in the next Page.

p. 18.

p. 19.

*That very name of Wife and Marriage,
 Is poyson to the dearest sweets of Love.*

I would give the Reader some more
 of these fine Sentences, but that they are

too much out of Order to appear. The truth is, Our *Stage-Poets* seem to fence against Censure by the excess of Lewdness; And to make the overgrown size of a Crime, a Ground for Impunity. As if a Malefactor should project his Escape by appearing too scandalous for Publick Trial. However, This is their Armour of Proof, this is the Strength they retreat to. They are fortified in Smut, and almost impregnable in Stench, so that where they deserve most, there's no coming at them. To proceed. I desire to know what Authority Mr. *Dryden* has for this extraordinary Representation? His Original *Plautus*, is no Precedent. Indeed *Plautus* is the only bold Heathen that ever made *Jupiter* tread the *Stage*. But then he stops far short of the Liberties of the *English Amphytrion*. *Jupiter* at *Rome*, and *London*, have the same unaccountable Design; but the Methods of pursuit are very different. The *First*, does not solicit in scandalous Language, nor flourish upon his Lewdness, nor endeavours to set it up for the Fashion. *Plautus* had some regard to the Height of the Character, and the Opinion of his Country, and the Restraints of Modesty. The Sallies of *Aristophanes* do not come up to the Case; And if they did, I have cut off the Succours from that

Lunuch.

Quarter already. *Terence's Chæres* is the next bold Man: However, here the Fable of *Jupiter* and *Diana* are just glanced at, and the Expression is clean; and He that tells the Story, a Young *Libertino*. These are all Circumstances of Extenuation, and give quite another Complexion to the Thing. As for the *Greek Tragedians* and *Seneca*, there's no Prescription can be drawn from them. They mention *Jupiter* in Terms of Magnificence and Respect, and make his Actions, and his Nature of a piece. But it may be the celebrated *Homer*, and *Virgil* may give Mr. *Dryden* some Countenance. Not at all. *Virgil's Jupiter* is always great, and solemn, and keeps up the port of a Deity. 'Tis true, *Homer* does not guard the Idea with that exactness, but then He never sinks the Character into Obscenity. The most exceptionable Passage is that where *Jupiter* relates his Love Adventures to *Juno*. Here this pretended Deity is charm'd with *Venus's* Girdle, is in the height of his Courtship, and under the Ascendant of his Passion. This 'tis confess'd was a slippery Place, and yet the Poet makes a shift to keep his Feet. His *Jupiter* is little, but not nauseous; The Story, tho' improper, will bear the telling, and look Conversation in the Face. However; these Freedoms

doms of *Homer* were counted intolerable: I shall not insist on the Censures of *Justin Martyr* or *Clemens Alexandrinus*: Even the Heathen could not endure them. The Poets are lashed by *Plato* upon this score; For planting Vice in Heaven, and making their Gods infectious. If Mr. *Dryden* answers that *Jupiter* can do us no harm. He is known to be an Idol of Lewd Memory, and therefore his Example can have no force: Under favour this is a mistake: For won't Pitch daub when a dirty Hand throws it; or can't a Toad spit Poyson because she's ugly? Ribaldry is dangerous under any Circumstances of Representation. And as *Menander* and *St. Paul* express it, *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*. I mention them both, because if the *Apostle* should be dislik'd, the *Comedian* may pass. But after all, Mr. *Dryden* has not so much as a Heathen Precedent for his Singularities. What then made him fall into them? Was it the Decency of the Thing, and the Propriety of Character, and Behaviour? By no means. For as I have observ'd before, Nature and Operations, ought to be proportion'd, and Behaviour suited to the Dignity of Being. To draw a Monkey in Royal Robes, and a Prince in Antick, would be Farce upon

*Euseb. pra-
par. E.
vang.*

Colours, entertain like a Monster, and please only upon the score of Deformity. Why then does Mr. *Dryden* cross upon Nature and Authority, and go off as he confesses, from the Plan of *Plautus*, and *Moliere*? Tho' by the way, the *English Amphytrion* has borrow'd most of the *Libertine Thoughts* of *Moliere*, and improv'd them. But to the former question. Why must the beaten Road be left? He tells us, *That the difference of our Stage from the Roman and the French did so require it.* That is, our Stage must be much more Licentious. For you are to observe that Mr. *Dryden*, and his Fraternity, have help'd to debauch the Town, and Poyson their Pleasures to an unusual Degree: And therefore the Diet must be dress'd to the Palate of the Company. And since they are made *Scepticks* they must be entertain'd as such. That the *English Amphytrion* was contriv'd with this View is too plain to be better interpreted. To what purpose else does *Jupiter* appear in the shape of *Jehovah*? Why are the incommunicable *Attributes* burlesqu'd, and Omnipotence applyed to Acts of Infamy? To what end can such Horrible Stuff as this serve, unless to expose the Notion, and extinguish the Belief of a Deity? The Perfections of God, are Himself. To
ridicule

ridicule his Attributes and his Being, are but two Words for the same Thing. These Attributes are bestow'd on *Jupiter* with great Prodigality, and afterwards execrably outrag'd. The Case being thus, the Cover of an Idol, is too thin a pretence to Screen the Blasphemy. Nothing but Mr. *Dryden's Absalom* and *Achitophel* can out-do This. Here I confess the Motion of his Pen is bolder, and the Strokes more Black'd. Here we have Blasphemy on the top of the Letter, without any trouble of Inference, or Construction. This Poem runs all upon Scripture Names, upon Supposition of the true Religion, and the right Object of Worship. Here Profaneness is shut out from Defence, and lies open without Colour or Evasion. Here are no Pagan Divinities in the Scheme, so that all the Atheistick Raillery must point upon the true God. In the Beginning we are told that *Absalom*, was *David's* Natural Son: So then there's a Blot in his *Scutcheon*, and a blemish upon his Birth. The Poet will make admirable use of this Remark presently! This *Absalom* it seems was very extraordinary in his Person and Performances. Mr. *Dryden* does not certainly know how this came about, and therefore enquires of himself in the first place

N 4

Wha-

+ Midas - The Golden Pippin and
 Poor Vulcan will fall under the same
 Censure.

*Whether inspired with a diviner Lust,
His Father got him—*

This is down right Defiance of the Living God? Here you have the very Essence and Spirit of Blasphemy, and the Holy Ghost brought in upon the most hideous Occasion. I question whether the Torments and Despair of the Dam'd, dare venture at such Flights as these. They are beyond Description, I Pray God they may not be beyond Pardon too. I can't forbear saying, that the next bad Thing to the writing these Impieties, is to Suffer them. To return to *Amphytrion*. *Phæbus* and *Mercury* have *Manners* assign'd very disagreeable to their Condition. The latter abating Propriety of Language, talks more like a *Water-man* than a Deity. They rail against the Gods, and call *Mars* and *Vulcan* the *two Fools of Heaven*: *Mercury* is pert upon his Father *Jupiter*, makes jests upon his Pleasures, and his Greatness, and is horribly Smutty and Profane. And all this Misbehaviour comes from him in his own Shape, and in the sublimity of his Character. Had he run Riot in the Disguise of *Sofia*, the Discourse and the Person had been better adjusted, and the Extravagance more Pardonable.

But

But here the Decorum is quite lost. To see the *Immortals* play such Gambols, and the biggest Beings do the least Actions, is strangely unparatral. An Emperor in the Grimaces of an Ape, or the Diversions of a Kitten, would not be half so ridiculous. Now as Monsieur *Rapin* observes, without Decorum there can be no *Probability*, nor without Probability any true Beauty. Nature must be minded, otherwise Things will look forced, tawdry, and chimerical. Mr. *Dryden* discourges very handsomly on this Occasion in his Preface to *Albion and Albanius*. He informs us, *That Wit has been truly defin'd a propriety of Words and Thoughts.*—

That Propriety of Thought is that Fancy which arises naturally from the Subject. Why then without doubt, the Quality of Characters should be taken care of, and great Persons appear like themselves. Yes, yes, all this is granted by Implication, and Mr. *Dryden* comes still nearer to the present Case. He tells us, that *Propriety is to be observed, even in Machines; And that the Gods are all to manage their Peculiar Provinces.* He instances in some of their respective Employments; but I don't find that any of them were to talk Lewdly. No; He plainly supposes the contrary. For as he goes on, *If they were to speak upon*
the

W. J.

the Stage, it would follow of necessity, that the Expressions should be Lofly, Figurative, and Majestical. It seems then their Behaviour should be agreeable to their Greatness. Why then are not these Rules observ'd, in the *Machines of Amphitrion*? As I take it, Obscenity has not the Air of Majesty, nor any Alliance with the *Sublime*. And as for the *Figurative Part*, 'tis generally of the same Cut with the *Lofly*: The Smut shines clear, and strong, through the Metaphor, and is no better screen'd than the Sun by a Glass Window. To use *Mercury* thus ill, and make the God of Eloquence speak so unlike himself, is somewhat strange! But tho' the *Ancients* knew nothing of it, there are Considerations above those of *Decency*. And when this happens, *A Rule must rather be trespass'd on, than a Beauty left out.* 'Tis Mr. Dryden's Opinion in his *Cleomenes*, where he breaks the *Unity of Time*, to describe the *Beauty* of a Famine. Now *Beaury* is an arbitrary Advantage, and depends upon Custom and Fancy. With some People the Blackest Complexions are the handsomest. 'Tis to these *African Criticks* that Mr. Dryden seems to make his Appeal. And without doubt he bespeaks their Favour, and strikes their Imagination luckily enough. For to lodge Divinity and Scandal together; To make
the

Prof.

the Gods throw *Stars*, like *Snow-balls* at one another, but especially to Court in Smut, and rally in Blasphemy, is most admirably entertaining! This is much better than all the Niceties of *Decorum*. 'Tis handsomely contriv'd, to slur the Notion of a Superiour Nature, to disarm the Terrors of Religion, and make the Court above as Romantick as that of the *Fairies*. A Libertine when his Conscience is thus reliev'd, and Atheism sits easie upon his Spirits, can't help being grateful upon the Occasion. Meer Interest will oblige him to cry up the Performance, and solicit for the *Poet's* Reputation! Before I take leave of these *Machines*, it may not be amiss to enquire why the Gods are brought into the *Spiritual Court*. Now I suppose the creditableness of the Business, and the *Poet's* kindness to those *Places*, are the principal Reasons of their coming. However, He might have a farther Design in his Head, and that is, to bring *Thebes* to London, and to shew the Antiquity of *Doctor's Commons*. For if you will believe *Mercury*, this Conference between him and *Phæbus*, was held three thousand Years ago. Thus *Shakespear* makes *Hector* talk about *Aristotle's* Philosophy, and calls Sir *John Old Castle*, *Protestant*. I had not mention'd this Discovery in Chronology, but

19.
Tril. and
Cressid.
The Hist.
of Sir John
Old Castle.

but that Mr. Dryden falls upon Ben Jonson, for making *Cataline* give Fire at the Face of a Cloud before Guns were invented.

By the Pattern of these pretended *Distin-*
ties, we may guess what sort of *Mortals* we
are likely to meet with. Neither are we
mistaken. For *Phædra* is bad enough in
all Conscience, but *Bromia* is a meer Ori-
ginal. Indeed when Mr. Dryden makes
Jupiter, and *Jupiter* makes the Women;
little less can be expected. So much for
Amphytrion.

King Ar-
thur.

I shall pass on to *King Arthur* for a
Word or two. Now here is a strange
Jumble and Hotch-potch of Matters, if
you mind it. Here we have *Genii*, and
Angels, *Cupids*, *Syrrens*, and *Devils*; *Venus*
and *St. George*, *Pan* and the *Parson*, the
Hell of Heathenism, and the Hell of *Re-*
velation; A fit of Smut, and then a Jest
about Original Sin. And why are Truth
and Fiction, Heathenism and Christianity,
the most Serious and the most Trifling
Things blended together, and thrown in-
to one Form of Diversion? Why is all
this done unless it be to ridicule the whole,
and make one as incredible, as the other?
His *Airy* and *Earthy Spirits* discourse of
the first state of Devils, of their Chief, of
their Revolt, their Punishment, and Im-
postures

postures. This Mr. Dryden very Religiously calls a *Fairy way of Writing*, which depends only on the Force of Imagination. Ep. D. 2. What then, is the Fall of the Angels a Romance? Has it no basis of Truth, nothing to support it, but strength of Fancy, and Poetick Invention? After He had mention'd Hell, Devils, &c. and given us a sort of Bible-description of these formidable Things; I say after he had formed his Poem in this manner, I am surprized to hear him call it a *Fairy kind of Writing*. Is the History of Tophet no better prov'd than that of Styx? Is the Lake of Brimstone and that of Phlegeton alike dreadful? And have we as much Reason to believe the Torments of Tisiphone and Prometheus, as those of the Devils and Damn'd? These are lamentable Consequences! And yet I can't well see how the Poet can avoid them. But setting aside this miserable Gloss in the *Dedication*, the Representation it self is scandalously irreligious. To droll upon the Vengeance of Heaven, and the Miseries of the Damn'd, is a sad Instance of Christianity! Those that bring Devils upon the Stage, can hardly believe them any where else. Besides the Effects of such an Entertainment must needs be admirable! To see Hell thus play'd with is a mighty Refreshment to a lewd Conscience

science, and a byass'd Understanding. It heartens the Young Libertine, and confirms the Well-wishers to Atheism, and makes Vice bold, and enterprizing. Such Diversions serve to dispel the Gloom, and guild the Horrors of the *Shades below*, and are a sort of Ensurance against Damnation. One would think these *Poets* went upon absolute Certainty, and could demonstrate
 + a Scheme of Infidelity. If they could, they had much better keep the Secret. The divulging it tends only to debauch Mankind, and shake the Securities of Civil Life. However, if they have been in the other World and find it empty, and uninhabited, and are acquainted with all the Powers, and Places in Being; If they can shew the Impostures of Religion, and the Contradictions of Common Belief, they have something to say for themselves. Have they then infallible Proof and Mathematick Evidence for these Discoveries? No Man had ever the Confidence to say This: And if he should, he would be but laughed at for his Folly. No Conclusions can exceed the Evidence of their Principles; you may as well build a Castle in the Air, as raise a Demonstration upon a Bottom of Uncertainty. And is any Man so vain as to pretend to know the Extent of Nature, and the Stretch of Possibility.
 and

+ Hume upon his death-bed jested about Cheson, &c.

See Hume's Letter to Adam Smith.

and the Force of the Powers Invisible? So that notwithstanding the Boldness of this Opera, there may be such a Place as Hell; And if so, a Discourse about Devils, will be no *Fairy Way of Writing*. For a *Fairy Way of Writing*, is nothing but a *History of Fiction*; A Subject of Imaginary Beings; such as never had any existence in Time, or Nature. And if as Monsieur Rapin observes, Poetry requires a mixture of *Truth* and *Fable*; Mr. Dryden may make his Advantage, for his *Play* is much better founded on Reality than He was aware of.

It may not be improper to consider in a Word or Two, what a frightful Idea the *Holy Scriptures* give us of Hell. 'Tis describ'd by all the Circumstances of Terror, by every Thing dreadful to Sense, and amazing to Thought. The Place, the Company, the Duration, are all Considerations of Astonishment. And why has God given us this solemn warning? Is it not to awaken our Fears, and guard our Happiness; To restrain the Disorders of Appetite, and to keep us within Reason, and Duty? And as for the *Apostate Angels*, the *Scriptures* inform us of their lost Condition, of their Malice and Power, of their Active Industry, and Experience; and all these Qualities Correspondent to the

the Bulk of their Nature, the Antiquity of their Being, and the Misery of their State. In short, they are painted in all the formidable Appearances imaginable, to alarm our Caution, and put us upon the utmost Defence.

Let us see now how Mr. Dryden represents these unhappy Spirits, and their Place of Abode. Why very entertainingly! Those that have a true Taste for Atheism, were never better regaled. One would think by this Play the Devils were meer Mormo's and Bugbears, fit only to fright Children and Fools. They rally upon Hell and Damnation, with a great deal of Air and Pleasantry; and appear like *Robin Goodfellow*, only to make the Company Laugh. *Philidel*: Is call'd a *Puling Sprite*. And why so? For this pious Reason, because

*He trembles at the yawning Gulph of Hell,
Nor dares approach the Flames lest he should
Sing*

His gaudy fallen Wings.

a. 6.

*He sighs when he should plunge a Soul in
Sulphur,*

As with Compassion touch'd of Foolish Man.

The answer is, *What a half Devil's he?*

You

You see how admirably it runs all upon the Christian Scheme! Sometimes they are *Half-Devils*, and sometimes *Hopeful-Devils*, and what you please to make sport with. *Grimbold* is afraid of being *whooped* through *Hell* at his return, for mis-carrying in his Business. It seems there is great Leisure for Diversion! There's *Whooping* in *Hell*, instead of *Weping* and *Wailing*! One would fancy Mr. *Dryden* had Day-light and Company, when these lines were written. I know his Courage is extraordinary; but sure such Thoughts could never bear up against Solitude and a Candle!

And now since he has diverted himself with the *Favours* of Christianity, I don't wonder he should treat those that Preach there with so much Civility! Enter *Poor* in the Habit of a Peasant.

We ha' Cheat'd the Parson we'll Cheat him
For why should a Blockhead have one in ten?
For prating so long like a Booklearn'd Sor,
Till Padding and Dumpling burn to Par.

These are fine comprehensive Strokes! Here you have the *Iliads* in a Nutshell! Two or three courtly Words take in the whole Clergy; And what is wanting in Wit, is made up in abuse, and that's as well.

O

This

This is an admirable *Harvest-Catch*, and the poor Tith-stealers stand highly indebted. They might have been tied with Cheating in *Prose*, had they not been thus seasonably reliev'd in Doggrel: But now there is Mulick in playing the Knave. A Country-man now may fill his Barn, and humour his ill Manners, and sing his Conscience asleep, and all under one. I don't question but these *four Lines* steal many a Pound in the Year. + Whether the *Mass* stands indictable or not, the Law must determine. But after all, I must say the Design is notably laid. For Place and Person, for Relish and Convenience, nothing could have been better. The Method is very Short, Clear, and Practicable. 'Tis a fine portable Infection, and costs no more Carriage than the Plague.

Well! The Clergy must be contented: It might possibly have been worse for them if they had been in his Favour; For he has sometimes a very unlucky way of shewing his Kindness. He commends the *Earl of*
Ep. Ded.
Don Sebast. Leiceſter, for considering the Friend, more than the Cause; that is, for his Partiality; The Marquess of Halifax, for quitting the
Ded. King
Arthur. Helm, at the approach of a Storm; As if Pilots were made only for fair Weather. 'Tis Presum'd these Noble Persons are unconcern'd in this Character. However the

Poet

+ See Leslie on the Divine right of
 Tythes.

Poet has shewn his Skill in Panegyrick, and 'tis only for that I mention it. He commends *Atticus* for his Trimming, and *Tully* for his Cowardise, and speaks meanly of the Bravery of *Cato*. Afterwards he professes his Zeal for the Publick Welfare, and is pleas'd to see the Nation so well secur'd from Foreign Attempts, &c. However he is in some pain about the coming of the Gauls. 'Tis possible for fear they should invade the *Muses*; and carry the *Opera's* into Captivity; and deprive us of the *Ornaments of Peace*. Schnst. K.
Arthur.

And now he has serv'd his Friends, he comes in the last place like a modest Man, to commend Himself. He tells us there were a great many *Beauties* in the Original Draught of this *Play*. But it seems Time has since tarnish'd their Complexion; And he gives *Heroick* Reasons for their not appearing. To speak Truth, (all Politicks apart,) there are strange Flights of Honour, and Consistencies of Pretention in this Dedication. But I shall forbear the Blazon of the *Atchievement*, for fear I should commend as unluckily as Himself. ibid.

S E C T. II.

Remarks upon Don Quixot, &c.

MR. *Dursey* being somewhat particular in his Genius and Civilities, I shall consider him in a Word or two by himself. This Poet writes from the *Romance* of an ingenious Author; By this means his Sense, and Characters are cut out to his Hand. He has wisely planted himself upon the Shoulders of a Giant; but whether his Discoveries answer the advantage of his standing, the Reader must judge.

What I have to object against Mr. *Dursey* shall most of it be ranged under these three Heads.

I. *His Profaneness, with respect to Religion and the Holy Scriptures.*

II. *His Abuse of the Clergy.*

III. *His want of Modesty and Regard to the Audience.*

I *His Profaneness, &c.*

And here my first Instance shall be in a bold Song against Providence.

Pro.

Providence that formed the Fair

*In such a charming Skin,
Their Outside made his only care,
And never look'd within.*

p. 18. p.
20.

Here the Poet tells you Providence makes Mankind by halves, huddles up the Soul, and takes the least care of the better Moiety. This is direct Blaspheming the Creation, and a Saryr upon God Almighty. His next advance is to droll upon the Resurrection.

*Sleep and indulge thy self with Rest;
Nor dream thou e'er shalt rise again.*

p. 20.

His Third Song makes a jest of the Fall, rails upon Adam and Eve, and burlesques the Conduct of God Almighty for not making Mankind over again.

*When the World first knew Creation,
A Rogue was a Top-Profession,
When there was no more in all Nature but*

p. 37.

*Four,
There were two of them in Transgression.*

*He that first to mend the Matter,
Made Laws to bind our Nature,
Should have found a way*

*To make Wills obey,
And have Modell'd new the Creature.*

In this and the following Page, the Redemption of the World is treated with the same respect with the Creation. The Word Redeemer, which among Christians is Appropriated to our Blessed Saviour, and like the Jewish Tetragrammaton peculiarly reserv'd to the Deity; This adorable Name (*Redeemer, and Dear Redeemer,*) is apply'd to the ridiculous Don Quixot: These Insolencies are too big for the Correction of a Pen, and therefore I shall leave them. After this horrible Abuse of the Works, and Attributes of God, he goes on to make Sport with his Vengeance. He makes the Torments of Hell a very Comical Entertainment; as if they were only Flames in Painting, and Terrors in Romance. The *Syrian Frogs* in *Aristophanes* are not represented with more Levity, and Drolling. That the Reader may see I do him no wrong, I shall quote the Places, which is the main Reason why I have transcrib'd the rest of his Profaneness.

*Appear ye fat Fiends that in Limbo do groan,
That were when in the Flesh the same Souls with
his own,*

You

*You that always in Lucifer's Kitchen reside,
Amongst Sea-coal and Kettles, and Grease
That pamper'd each day with a Garbidge of
Souls,
Broil Rasbers of Fools for a Breakfast on
Coals.*

*In the Epilogue you have the History
of Balaam's Ass exposed, and the Beast
brought upon the Stage, to laugh at the
Miracle the better;*

*And as 'tis said a parlous Ass once spoke,
When Crab-tree Cudgel did his Rage provoke.
So if you are not evil, — I fear
He'll speak again, —*

*In the Second Part the Devil is brought
upon the Stage. He cries as he hopes to be
Saved. And Sancho warrants him a good
Christian. Truly I think he may have more
of Christianity in him than the Poet. For
he trembles at that God, with whom the
other makes Diversion.*

*I shall omit the mention of several
Ontrages of this Kind, besides his deep-
mouth'd Swearing, which is frequent, and
pass on to the Second Head, which is his
Abuse of the Clergy. And since Reveal'd
Religion has been thus horribly treated,*

'tis no Wonder if the Ministers of it have the same Usage.

And here we are likely to meet with some Passages extraordinary enough. For to give Mr. *Darvey* his due, when he meddles with Church-men, he lays about him like a Knight-Errant: Here his Wit and his Malice, are generally in Extreame, tho' not of the same Kind. To begin. He makes the Curate *Peret* assist at the ridiculous Ceremony of Don *Quixote's* Knighting. Afterwards Squire *Sancho* confessing his Mistake to *Quixot*, tells him, *Oh consider, dear Sir, no Man is born Wise; Then I think the greater Care should be taken he is not bred a Fool. But how does he prove this Memorable Sentence? Because a Bishop is no more than another Man, without Grace and Good Breeding. I must needs say, if the Poet had any share of either of these Qualities, he would be less bold with his Superiors; and not give his Clowns the Liberty to droll thus heavily upon a solemn Character.* This *Sancho* Mr. *Darvey* takes care to inform us, is a dry shrewd Country Fellow. The reason of this Character is, for the strength of it somewhat Surprising. 'Tis because he blunders out Proverbs upon all Occasions, tho' never so far from the Purpose. Now if blundring and talking nothing

Part 1.

p. 13.

Person.

Dram.

to

to the purpose, is an Argument of Shrewd-
 ness, some Peoples Blaz are very shrewd
 Performances. To proceed. Sancho com-
 plains of his being married because it hin-
 dered him from better offers. Perez the
 Curate is sorry for this Misfortune: For
 as I remember, says he, *was my luck to give*
Teresa and you the Blessing. To this Sancho
 replies. *A Plague on your Blessing! I per-*
ceive I shall have Reason to wish you bang'd
for your Blessing. Good finisher of For-
 mation, good Conjunction Copulation. For
 this Irreverence and Profaneness Perez
 threatens him with Excommunication.
 Sancho tells him, I care not, I shall lose no-
 thing by it but a nap in the Afternoon. In
 his second Part Jodote a Priest is call'd a
 Holy Cormorant, and made to dispatch half
 a Turkey and a Boar of Malaga for his Break-
 fast. Here one Country Girl chides ano-
 ther for her sawcyness. D'ee (says she)
 make a Pimp of a Priest? Sancho interposes
 with his usual shrewdness: *A Pimp of a Priest,*
a that such Miracle: In the Second Scene the
 Poet Provides himself another Priest to
 abuse. Mammel the Steward calls Bernardo
 the Chaplain Mr. Cuff-Cushion, and tells
 him *a Where is a Pulpit he loves.* In
 setting the Characters, Mammel is given out
 for a witty pleasant Fellow. And now you see
 he comes up to Expectation. To the Blind
 all

p. 10.

all Colours are alike, and Rudeness and Raillery are the same thing. Afterwards, *Bernardo* says *Grace* upon the Stage; and I suppose Prays to God to bless the Entertainment of the Devil. Before they rise from Table, the Poet contrives a Quarrel between *Don Quixot* and *Bernardo*. The Priest rails on the Knight, and calls him *Don Coxcomb*, &c. By this time you may imagin the Knight heartily Provok'd, ready to buckle on his *Bason*, and draw out for the Combat. Let us hear his Resentment.

p. 41.

Don Quix. Oh! thou old black Fox with a Firebrand in thy Tail, thou very Priest: Thou Kindler of all Mischiefs in all Nations. D'ee hear, *Homily*: Did not the Reverence I bear these Nobles—I would so thrum your Cassock you Church Vermin.

p. 47.

At last he bids *Bernardo* adieu in Language too Profane and Scandalous to relate. In the Fourth Act His Song calls the Clergy Black Cattle, and says no Body now minds what they say. I could alledge more of his Courtship to the Order, but, the Reader might possibly be tired, and therefore I shall proceed in the

part 1st.

p. 7. 8.

pt. 2d.

p. 57.

Third place, to his want of Modesty, and Regard to the Audience. As for *Smut Sancho* and *Teresa* talk it abroad, and single sens'd, for almost a Page together. Mary the

the *Buccon* has likewise her Share of this Accomplishment. The first Epilogue is Garnish'd with a Couplet of it; *Marcella* the Maiden Sheperdess raves in Raptures of Indecency; And sometimes you have it mixt up with Profaneness, to make the Composition the stronger. But this Entertainment being no Novelty, I shall pass it over; and the rather because there are some other Rarities which are not to be met with elsewhere.

Here he diverts the Ladies with the Charming Rhetorick of *Snotty-Nose*, *filthy Vermin in the Beard*, *Nitty Jerkin*, *Louse Snapper*, *knads the Letter in the Chamber-pot*; with an abusive description of a Countess, and a rude Story of a certain Lady with some other Varieties of this Kind, too coarse to be named. This is rare stuff for Ladies, and Quality! There is more of *Physick*, than *Comedy*, in such Sentences as these. *Crocus Metallorum* will scarce turn the Stomach more effectually. 'Tis possible Mr. *Dursey* might design it for a *Receipt*; And being Conscious the *Play* was too dear, threw a Vomit into the Bargain. I wonder Mr. *Dursey* should have no more regard to the *Boxes* and *Pit*! That a Man who has studied the *Scenes* of Decency and Good Manners with so much Zeal, should practise with so little Address! Certainly

in-

pr. 2d.

p. 60.

pr. 1st.

p. 38.

pr. 2d.

p. 14.

pr. 1st.

p. 7. 8.

pr. 2d.

p. 52.

pr. 2d.

p. 36. 49.

p. 2d.

pr. 37. 44.

Prof. pr. 34.

ibid. *indefatigable Diligence, Care and Pain,* was never more unfortunate! In his *Third Part*, *Bonnie* swears faster, and is more scandalous, and impertinent, than in the other two. At these Liberties, and some in *Sancho*, the Ladies took Check. This Censure Mr. *Darvey* seems heartily sorry for. He is *extremely concern'd* that the Ladies, that *Essential Part of the Audience*, should think, his Performance was *rusty and undecent*. That is, he is very sorry they brought their Wits, or their Modesty along with them. However Mr. *Darvey* is not so Ceremonious as to submit: He is resolved to keep the Field against the Ladies; And endeavours to defend himself by saying, *I know no other way in Nature to do the Characters right, but to make a Rump speak like a Rump, and a clownish Boor blunder, &c.*

Pres.

ibid.

By his Favour, all Imitations tho' never so well Counterfeited are not proper for the *Stage*. To Present Nature under every Appearance would be an odd undertaking. A *Midnight Cart*, or a *Dunghil* would be no ornamental *Scene*. Nasty-ness, and dirty Conversation are of the same kind. For *Words* are a Picture to the Ear, as *Colours and Surface* are to the Eye. Such Discourses are like dilating upon Ulcers, and Leprosies: The more

Na-

Natural, the worse; for the Disgust always rises with the Life of the Description. Offensive Language like offensive Smells, does but make a Man's Senses a burthen, and affords him nothing but Loathing and Aversion. Beastliness in Behaviour, gives a discouraging Idea of Humane Nature, and almost makes us sorry we are of the same Kind. For these Reasons 'tis a Maxim in Good Breeding never to shock the Senses, or Imagination. This Rule holds strongest before *Woman*, and especially when they come to be entertain'd. The Diversion ought to be suited to the Audience; For nothing pleases which is disproportion'd to Capacity, and Gust. The Rudenesses and broad Jest of Beggars, are just as acceptable to Ladies as their Rags, and Cleanliness. To treat Persons of Condition like the *Mob*, is to degrade their Birth, and affront their Breeding. It levels them with the lowest Education. For the size of a Man's Sense, and Improvement, is discovered by his Pleasures, as much as by any thing else.

But to remove from *Scenes of Decency*, to *Scenes of Wit*. And here *Mannet* and *Sancho*, two pleasant sharp Fellows, will divert us extremely. *Mannet* in the Disguise of a Lady addresses the Dutchess in this manner.

Person.
Dram.

manner. *Illustrious Beauty.* — I must desire to know whether the most purestidiferous Don Quixot of the Manchissima, and his squit-reiferous Pancha, be in this Company or no. This is the Ladies Speech! Now comes Sancho. Why took you Forsooth, without any more Flourishes, the Governour Panca is here, and Don Quixotissimo too; therefore most af-flittedissimous Matronissima, speak what you willissimus, for we are all ready to be your Ser-visorissimus.

Dr. 2d.
P. 31.

I dare not go on, for fear of overlaying the Reader. He may cloy himself at his Leisure. The Scene between the Taylor and Gardiner, lies much in the same Latitude of Understanding.

P. 51.

The Third Part presents a Set of Poppets, which is a Thought good enough; for this Play is only fit to move upon Wires. 'Tis pity these little Machines appear'd no sooner, for then the Sense, and the Actors had been well adjusted. In explaining the Persons, he acquaints us that Carasco is a Witty Man. I can't tell what the Gentleman might be in other Places, but I'm satisfied he is a Fool in his Play. But some Poets are as great Judges of Wit, as they are an Instance; And have the Theory and the Practice just alike.

Mr. Dursley's Epistles Dedicatory are to the full as diverting as his Comedies. A little of them may not be amiss. In

In his first, He thus addresses the Dut-
chess of Ormonde. *Tis Madam from your Gra-
ces Prosperous Influence that I date my Good
Fortune.* To Date from time and Place,
is vulgar and ordinary, and many a Letter
has miscarried with it. But to do it from
an Influence, is Astrological, and surprising,
and agrees extremely with the Hemisphere Pr f. pr.
1st.
of the Play-House. These Flights one would
easily imagine were the Poor Offspring of
Mr. Dursley's Brain, as he very judiciously
Phrases it.

One Paragraph in his Dedication to Mr. Ibid.
Montague is perfect Quixotism; One would
almost think him enchanted. I'll give the
Reader a Tass.

*Had your Eyes shot the haughty Austerity
upon me of a right Courtier, — your valued* Pr. 3d.
*minutes had never been disturb'd with dilatory
Trifles of this Nature, but my Heart on dull
Consideration of your Merit, had supinely
wish'd your Prosperity at a Distance.* I'm
afraid the Poet was under some Apprehen-
sions of the Temper he complains of. For
to my thinking, there is a great deal of Sa-
pineness, and dull Consideration in these Peri-
ods. He tells his Patron *his Smiles have
embolden'd him.* I confess I can't see how
He could forbear Smiling at such Entertain-
ment. However, Mr. Dursley takes Things
by the best Handle, and is resolv'd to be
happy

happy in his Interpretation. But to be serious. Were I the Author, I would discharge my Muse unless she prov'd kinder. His way is rather to cultivate his Lungs, and Sing to other Peoples Sense; For to finish him in a Word, he is *Vox & preterea nihil*. I speak this only on Supposition, that the rest of his Performances are like These. Which because I have not perus'd, I can judge of no farther than by the Rule of *ex pede Herculem*. I shall conclude with Monsieur Boileau's Art of Poetry. This citation may possibly be of some Service to Mr. Dursley; For if not concern'd in the Application, he may at least be precaution'd by the Advice.

The Translation runs thus.

p. 53.

I like an Author that Reforms the Age;
And keeps the right Decorum of the Stage:
That always pleases by just Reason's Rule
But for a tedious Drall, a Quibbling Fool;
Who with low nauseous Baudry fills his Plays;
Let him be gone and on two Treffels raise
Some Smithfield Stage, where he may all his
Pranks,
And make Jack-puddings speak to Mount-
banks.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Remarks upon the Relapse.

THE Relapse shall follow *Don Quixot*, upon the Account of some Alliance between them. And because this Author swaggers so much in his Preface, and seems to look big upon his Performance, I shall spend a few more Thoughts than ordinary upon his Play, and examine it briefly in the Fable, the Moral, the Characters, &c. The Fable I take to be as follows.

Fashion a Lewd, Prodigal, younger Brother, is Reduced to Extremity: Upon his arrival from his Travels, he meets with Coupler, an old sharpening Match-maker; This Man puts him upon a Project of Cheating his Elder Brother Lord Poplington, of a rich Fortune. Young Fashion being refused a Sum of Money by his Brother, goes into Coupler's Plot, bubbles Sir Tunbelly of his Daughter, and makes himself Master of a fair Estate.

From the Form and Constitution of the Fable, I observe

1st. That there is a Misnomer in the Title. The Play should not have been call'd the Relapse, or Virtue in Danger.

P. Lowland,

Remarks upon

Lovelace, and *Amanda*, from whose Characters these Names are drawn, are Persons of Inferiour Consideration. *Lovelace* sinks in the middle of the Fourth Act, and we hear no more of him till towards the End of the Fifth, where he enters once more, but then 'tis as *Cato* did the Senate-House, only to go out again. And as for *Amanda* she has nothing to do but to stand a shock of Courtship, and carry off her Virtue. This I confess is a great Task in the Play-House, but no main Matter in the Play.

The Intrigue, and the Discovery, the great Revolution and Success, turns upon *Young Fashion*. He without Competition, is the Principal Person in the Comedy. And therefore the *Younger Brother*, or the *Fortunate Cheat*, had been much a more proper Name. Now when a Poet can't rig out a Title Page, 'tis but a bad sign of his holding out to the Epilogue.

24. I observe the Moral is vitious: It points the wrong Way, and puts the Prize into the wrong Hand. It seems to make *Loveliness* the reason of Desert, and gives *Young Fashion* a Second Fortune, only for Debauching away his First. A short View of his Character, will make good this Reflection. To begin with him; He confesses himself a Rake, Swears, and Blasphemes, Curfes,

Curses, and Challenges his Elder Brother, cheats him of his Mistress, and gets him laid by the Heels in a Dog-Hennel. And what was the Ground of all this unnatural Quarrelling and Outrage? Why the main of it was only because Lord Foplingston refused to supply his Luxury, and make good his Extravagance. This Young Fop after all, is the Poet's Man of Merit, he provides a Plot and a Fortune, on purpose for him. To speak freely, A Lewd Character seldom wants good Luck in Comedy. So that when-ever you see a thorough Libertine, you may almost Swear he is in a rising Way, and that the Poet intends to make him a great Man. In short: This Play perverts the End of Comedy: Which as Monsieur Rapin observes ought to regard Reformation, and publick Improvement. But the Relapser had a more fashionable Fancy in his Head. His Moral holds forth this notable Instruction.

Reflect.
Ec. p. 131.

1st. That all Younger Brothers should be careful to run out their Fortunes as Fast, and as Ill as they can. And when they have put their Affairs in this Posture of Advantage, they may conclude themselves in the high Road to Wealth, and Success. For as Fashion Blasphemously applies it, Providence

Relapse, p.
19.

2^{dly}. That when a Man is press'd, his Business is not to be govern'd by Scruples, or formalize upon Conscience and Honesty. The quickest Expedients are the best. For in such Cases the Occasion justifies the Means, and a Knight of the *Post* is as good as one of the *Garter*. In the

3^d. Place it may not be improper to look a little into the *Plot*. Here the *Poet* ought to play the Politician if ever. This part should have some Strokes of Conduct, and strains of Invention more than ordinary. There should be something that is admirable, and unexpected to surprise the Audience. And all this Fineness must work by gentle Degrees, by a due Preparation of *Incidents*, and by Instruments which are probable. 'Tis Mr. *Rapin's* Remark, that without Probability every Thing is *Lame and Faulty*. Where there is no pretence to *Miracle* and *Machine*, matters must not exceed the force of Belief. To produce effects without Proportion, and likelihood in the Cause, is Farce, and Magick, and looks more like Conjuring than Conduct. Let us examine the *Relapser* by these Rules. To discover his *Plot*, we must lay open somewhat more of the *Fable*.

Reflect.

P. 133.

Lord *Foplington* a Town Beau, had agreed to Marry the Daughter of Sir
'*Tun-*

Tunbely Clamsey a Country Gentleman,
 who liv'd Fifty Miles from London. Not-
 withstanding this small distance, the
 Lord had never seen his Mistress, nor
 the Knight his Son in Law. Both par-
 ties out of their great Willdom, leave the
 treating the Match to *Coupler*. When
 all the Preliminaries of Settlement were
 adjusted, and Lord *Foplington* expected
 by Sir *Tunbely* in a few Days, *Coupler*
 betrays his Trust to *Young Fashion*. He
 advises him to go down before his Bro-
 ther. To Counterfeit his Person, and
 pretend that the strength of his Inclina-
 tions brought him thither before his Time,
 and without his Retinue. And to make
 him pass upon Sir *Tunbely*, *Coupler* gives
 him his Letter, which was to be Lord
Foplington's Credential. *Young Fashion*
 thus provided, posts down to Sir *Tun-
 bely*, is received for Lord *Foplington*, and
 by the help of a little Folly and Knavery
 in the Family, Marries the young Lady
 without her Father's Knowledge, and a
 Week before the Appointment.

This is the Main of the Contrivance.
 The Counter-turn in Lord *Foplington's* ap-
 pearing afterwards, and the Support of
 the main Plot, by *Bull's*, and *Nurse's* at-
 testing the Marriage, contains little of
 Moment. And here we may observe that

p. 27.

p. 79.

Ibid.

Lord *Eslington* has an unlucky Disagreement in his Character; This Misfortune sits hard upon the Credibility of the Design. 'Tis true he was Formal and Fantastick, Smitten with Dress, and Equipage, and it may be vapour'd by his Perfumes; But his Behaviour is far from that of an Ideot. This being granted, 'tis very unlikely this Lord with his five Thousand Pounds *per Annum*, should leave the Choise of his Mistress to *Coupler*, and take her Person and Fortune upon Content. To court thus Blindfold, and by *Proxy*, does not agree with the Method of an Estate, nor the Niceness of a Beau. However the Poet makes him engage Hand over Head, without so much as the sight of her Picture. His going down to Sir *Tunbelly* was as extraordinary as his Courtship. He had never seen this Gentleman. He must know him to be beyond Measure Suspicious, and that there was no Admittance without *Coupler's* Letter. This Letter which was, the Key to the Castle, he forgot to take with him, and tells you 'twas stolen by his Brother *Tam*. And for his part he neither had the Discretion to get another, nor yet to produce that writen by him to Sir *Tunbelly*. Had common Sense been consulted upon this Occasion, the Plot had been at an End, and the Play had sunk in

in the Fourth Act. The Remainder subsists purely upon the strength of Folly, and of Folly altogether improbable, and out of Character. The *Salvo* of Sir John Friendly's appearing at last, and vouching for Lord Foplington, won't mend the matter. For as the Story informs us, Lord Foplington never depended on this Reserve: p. 81. He knew nothing of this Gentleman being in the Country, nor where he Lived. The truth is, Sir John was left in Town, and the Lord had neither concerted his Journey with him, nor engaged his Assistance.

Let us now see how Sir Tanbelly hangs p. 83. together. This Gentleman the Poet makes a Justice of Peace, and a Deputy Lieutenant, and seats him fifty Miles from London: But by his Character you would take him for one of Hercules's Monsters, or some Gyant in *Guy of Warwick*. His Behaviour is altogether Romance, and has nothing agreeable to Time, or Country. When *Fashion* and *Lory*, went down, they find the Bridge drawn up, the Gates barr'd, and the Blunderbuls cock'd at the first civil Question. And when Sir Tanbelly had Notice of this formidable Appearance, he sallies out with the *Passé* of the Family, and marches against a Couple of Strangers with a *Life-Guard* of Halberds, Sythes, P 4 and

and Pitchforks. And to make sure Work, Young *Hoyden* is lock'd up at the first approach of the Enemy. Here you have Prudence and Wariness to the excess of Fable, and Frenzy. And yet this mighty Man of Suspicion, trusts *Coupler* with the Disposal of his only Daughter, and his Estate into the Bargain. And what was this *Coupler*? Why a Sharper by Character, and little better by Profession. Farther, Lord *Foplington* and the Knight, are but a Days Journey asunder, and yet by their treating by Proxy, and Commission, one would fancy a dozen Degrees of Latitude betwixt them. And as for Young *Fashion*, excepting *Coupler's* Letter, he has all imaginable Marks of Imposture upon him. He comes before his Time, and without the Retinue expected, and has nothing of the Air of Lord *Foplington's* Conversation. When Sir *Tunbely* ask'd him, *Pray where are your Coaches and Servants my Lord?* He makes a trifling Excuse. *Sir, that I might give you and your Fair Daughter a proof how impatient I am to be nearer akin to you, I left my Equipage to follow me, and came away Post, with only one Servant.* To be in such a Hurry of Inclination for a Person he never saw, is somewhat strange! Besides, 'tis very unlikely Lord *Foplington* should hazard his

Com-

Complexion on Horseback, out-ride his Figure, and appear a Bridegroom in *Deſhabille*. You may as ſoon perſwade a Peacock out of his Train, as a *Beau* out of his Equipage; eſpecially upon ſuch an Occaſion. Lord *Foplington* would ſcarce-ly ſpeak to his Brother juſt come a Shore, till the Grand Committee of *Tailors, Seam-^{p. 11.}treſſes, &c.* was diſpatch'd. Pomp, and Curioſity were this Lord's Inclination; why then ſhould he mortifie without neceſſity, make his firſt Approaches thus out of Form, and preſent himſelf to his Miſtreſs at ſuch Diſadvantage? And as this is the Character of Lord *Foplington*, fo 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe Sir *Tunbelly* acquainted with it. An enquiry into the Humour and Management of a Son in Law, is very Natural and Cuſtomary. So that we can't without Violence to Senſe, ſuppoſe Sir *Tunbelly* a Stranger to Lord *Foplington's* Singularities. Theſe Reaſons were enough in all Conſcience to make Sir *Tunbelly* ſuſpect a Juggle, and that *Faſhion* was no better than a Counterfeit. Why then was the *Credential* ſwallow'd without chewing, why was not *Hoyden* lock'd up, and a pauſe made for farther Enquiry? Did this *Juſtice* never hear of ſuch a Thing as Knavery, or had he ever greater reaſon to guard againſt it? More wary ſteps might

might well have been expected from Sir *Tanbelly*. To run from one extrem of Caution, to another of Credulity, is highly improbable. In short, either Lord *Foplington*, and Sir *Tanbelly* are Fools, or they are not. If they are, where lies the Cunning in over-reaching them? What Conquest can there be without Opposition? If they are not Fools, why does the *Poet* make them so? Why is their Conduct so gross, so particular'd, and inconsistent? Take them either way, and the *Plot* miscarries. The first Supposition makes it dull, and the later Incredible. So much for the *Plot*. I shall now in the

4th. Place touch briefly upon the *Manners*.

Manners.

The *Manners* in the Language of the *Stage* have a Signification somewhat particular. *Aristotle* and *Rapin* call them the Causes and Principles of Action. They are formed upon the Diversities of Age, and Sex, of Fortune, Capacity, and Education. The Propriety of *Manners* consists in a Conformity of Practice, and Principle; of Nature, and Behaviour. For the Purpose. An old Man must not appear with the Profuseness and Levity of Youth; A Gentleman must not talk like a *Clown*, nor a *Country* Girl like a *Town* *Jill*. And when the *Characters* are feign'd

'tis

'tis *Horace's* Rule to keep them Uniform, and consistent, and agreeable to their first setting out. The *Poet* must be careful to hold his *Persons* tight to their *Calling* and *Preteritions*. He must not shift, and shuffle their *Understandings*; Let them slip from *Wits* to *Blockheads*, nor from *Cour-tiers* to *Pedants*. On the other hand, If their *Business* is playing the *Pool*, keep them strictly to their *Duty*, and never indulge them in fine *Sentences*. To manage otherwise, is to desert *Nature*, and makes the *Play* appear *Monstrous*, and *Chimerical*. So that instead of an *Image of Life*, 'tis rather an *Image of Impossibility*. To apply some of these *Remarks* to the *Relapser*.

The fine *Berinthia*, one of the *Top-Characters*, is *Impudent* and *Profane*. *Lovelace* would engage her *Secrecy*, and bids her *Swear*. She answers *I do*.

Lov. By what?

Berinth. By *Woman*.

Lov. That's *Swearing*, by my *Deity*, do it by your own, or I shan't believe you.

Berinth. By *Man* then.

This *Lady* promises *Worthy* her *Endeavours* to corrupt *Amanda*; and then they make a *Profane Jest* upon the *Office*.
In the progress of the *Play* after a great deal of *Lewd Discourse* with *Lovelace*,
Ber-

p. 74.

Berinthia is carried off into a Closet, and Lodged in a Scene of Debauch. Here is Decency, and Reservedness, to a great exactness! Monsieur *Rapin* blames *Ariosto*, and *Tasso*, for representing two of their Women over-free, and Airy. These Poets says he, rob Women of their Character, which is Modesty. Mr. Rymer is of the same Opinion: His words are these. Nature knows

Reflect,
p. 40.

Tragedies
of the last
Age con-
sider'd, &c.
p. 113,
114.

nothing in the Manners which so properly, and particularly distinguish a Woman, as her Modesty. — An impudent Woman is fit only to be kicked, and expos'd in Comedy.

Now *Berinthia* appears in Comedy 'tis true; but neither to be kick'd, nor expos'd. She makes a considerable Figure, has good Usage, keeps the best Company, and goes off without Censure, or Disadvantage. Let us now take a Turn or two with Sir *Tumbelly's* Heiress of 1500 pounds a Year. This young Lady Swears, talks Smut, and is upon the Matter just as rag-manner'd as *Marythe Buxome*. 'Tis plain the *Relapser* copyed Mr. *Dursey's* Original, which is a sign he was somewhat Pinch'd. Now this Character was no great Beauty in *Buxome*; But it becomes the Knights Daughter much worse. *Buxome* was a poor Peasant, which made her Rudeness more Natural, and expected. But Deputy Lieutenants Children don't
ule

use to appear with the Behaviour of Beggars. To breed all People alike, and make no distinction between a *Seas*, and a *Cottage*, is not over-ardent, nor very ceremonious to the Country Gentlemen. The *Relapser* gives *Miss* a pretty Soliloquy. I'll transcribe it for the Reader.

She Swears by her Maker, 'tis well I *have* a Husband a coming, or *Pde* Marry the Baker, I would so. No body can knock at the Gate, but presently I must be lock'd up, and here's the Young Gray-hound—can run loose about the House all day long; she can, 'tis very well! Afterwards her Language is too Lewd to be Quoted. Here is a Compound of Ill Manners, and Contradiction! Is this a good Resemblance of Quality, a Description of a great Heiress and the effect of a cautious Education? By her *Coarsness* you would think her Bred upon a Common, and by her *Confidence*, in the Nursery of the Play-House. I suppose the *Relapser* Fancies the calling her *Miss Hoyden* is enough to justify her Ill Manners. By his favour, this is a Mistake. To represent her thus unhewn, he should have suited her Condition to her Name, a little better. For there is no Charm in Words as to Matters of Breeding. An unfashionable Name won't make a Man a Clown. Education is not form'd upon Sounds,

Sounds, and Syllables, but upon Circumstances, and Quality. So that if he was resolv'd to have shewn her thus unpolish'd, he should have made her keep Sheep, or brought her up at the *Wash-Bowl*.

p. 61.

Sir *Tumbelly* accosts Young *Fashion* much at the same rate of Accomplishment. My Lord, — *I humbly crave leave to bid you Welcome in a Cup of Sack-Wine*. One would imagine the Poet was overdozed before he gave the *Justice* a Glass. For *Sack-Wine* is too low for a *Perry Constable*. This Peasantly expression agrees neither with the Gentleman's Figure, nor with the rest of his Behaviour. I find we should have a *Creditable Magistracy*, if the *Relapser* had the Making them. Here the *Characters* are pinch'd in Sense, and stinted to short Allowance. At an other Time they are over-indulged, and treated above Expectation.

For the purpose. Vanity and Formalizing is Lord *Foplington's* Part, To let him speak without Awkwardness, and Affectation, is to put him out of his Element. There must be Gumm and stiffening in his Discourse to make it Natural. However, the *Relapser* has taken a fancy to his Person, and given him some of the most Gentile raillery in the whole Play. To give an Instance or two. This Lord

in

in Discourse with *Fashion* forgets his Name, flies out into Sense, and smooth expression, out-talks his Brother, and abating the stanch'd Similitude of a *Watch*, discovers nothing of Affectation, for almost a Page^{p. 42.} together. He Relapses into the same Intemperance of Good Sense, in another Dialogue between him and his Brother. I shall cite a little of it.

T. Fash. Unless you are so kind to assist me in redeeming my Annuity, I know no Remedy, but to go take a Purse.

L. Fopl. Why *Faith Tam* ——— to give you my Sense of the Thing, I do think taking a Purse the best Remedy in the World, for if you succeed, you are reliev'd that way, if you are taken ——— you are reliev'd t'other.^{p. 43.}

Fashion being disappointed of a supply^{p. 44.} quarrels his Elder Brother, and calls him the Prince of Coxcombs.

L. Fopl. Sir I am proud of being at the Head of so prevailing a Party.

T. Fash. Will nothing then provoke thee? Draw Coward.

L. Fopl. Look you *Tam*, your Poverty makes your Life so burthensome to you, you would provoke me to a Quarrel, in hopes either to slip through my Lungs into my Estate, or else to get your self run through the Guts, to put an End to your Pain. But I shall disappoint you in both, &c.

This

This Drolling has too much Spirit, the Air of it is too free, and too handsomely turn'd for Lord *Foylington's* Character. I grant the *Relapser* could not afford to lose these Sentences. The Scene would have suffer'd by the Omission. But then he should have contriv'd the Matter so, as that they might have been spoken by Young *Fashion* in *Asides*, or by some other more proper Person. To go on. Miss *Hoyden* sparkles too much in Conversation. The Poet must needs give her a shining Line or two, which serves only to make the rest of her dullness the more remarkable. Sir *Tumblety* falls into the same Misfortune of a Wit, and rallies above the force of his Capacity. But the place having a mixture of Profaneness, I shall forbear to cure it. Now to what purpose should a Fool's Coat be embroider'd? Finery in the wrong place is but expensive Ridiculousness. Besides, I don't perceive the *Relapser* was in any Condition to be thus liberal. And when a Poet is not overstock'd, to squander away his Wit among his *Block-heads*, is meer Distraction. His Men of Sense will smart for this prodigality. *Lovelace* in his Discourse of Friendship, shall be the first Instance. Friendship (says he) is said to be a Plant of sedious growth, its Root composed of tender Fibers,

nice

This seems
to admit
of this kind
of restraint

See p. 64.
At top.
Tract 2.
p. 8.

p. 85.

and F

nice in their Taste, &c. // By this Description the *Palate of a Fiber*, should be somewhat more *nice* and distinguishing, than the *Poets* Judgment. Let us examin some more of his Witty People. Young *Fashion* fancies by *Misses* forward Behaviour, she would have a whole *Kenel* of *Beaux* after her at *London*. And then, *Hey to the Park, and the Play, and the Church, and the Devil*.^{p. 64.} Here I conceive the ranging of the Period is amiss. For if he had put the *Play*, and the *Devil* together, the Order of Nature, and the Air of Probability had been much better observ'd.

Afterwards *Coupler* being out of Breath in coming up Stairs to *Fashion*, asks him why the — canst thou not Lodge upon the *Ground-Floor*?^{p. 94.}

T. Fash. Because I love to lie as near Heaven as I can. One would think a Spark just come off his Travels, and had made the *Tour of Italy and France*, might have rallied with a better Grace: However if he lodg'd in a *Garret*, 'tis a good *Local Jest*. I had almost forgot one pretty remarkable Sentence of *Fashion* to *Lory*. I shall shew^{p. 15.} thee (says he) the excess of my Passion by being very Calm. Now since this Gentleman was in a Vein of Talking Philosophy to his Man, I'm sorry he broke off so quickly, Had he gone on and shewn him the Excess

Q

of

of a Storm and no Wind stirring, the Topick had been spent, and the Thought improv'd to the utmost.

Let us now pass on to *Worthy*, the *Relapser's* fine Gentleman. This Spark sets up for Sense, and Address, and is to have nothing of Affectation or Conscience to spoil his Character. However to say no more of him, he grows Foppish in the last Scene, and courts *Amanda* in Fustian, and Pedantry. First, He gives his Periods a turn of Versification, and talks *Prose* to her in *Meeter*. Now this is just as agreeable as it would be to *Ride* with one Leg, and *Walk* with the other. But let him speak for himself. His first Business is to bring *Amanda* to an Aversion for her Husband; And therefore he persuades her to *Rouse up that Spirit Woman ought to bear; and slight your God if he neglects his Angel*. He goes on with his Orisons. *With Arms of Ice receive his Cold Embraces, and keep your Fire for those that come in Flames*. Fire and Flames is Mettal upon Mettal; 'Tis false Heraldry. *Extend the Arms of Mercy to his Aid*. *His Zeal may give him Title to your Pity, altho' his Merit cannot claim your Love*. Here you have *Arms* brought in again by Head and Shoulders. I suppose the Design was to keep up the Situation of the *Allegory*. But the latter part of the Speech is very Pithy.

He

p. 99.

Ibid.

He would have her resign her Virtue out of Civility, and abuse her Husband on Principles of good Nature. *Worthy* pursues his Point, and Rises in his Address. He falls into a Fit of Dissection, and hopes to gain his Mistress by cutting his Throat. He is for *Ripping up his Faithful Breast*, to prove the Reality of his Passion. Now when a Man courts with his Heart in his Hand, it must be great Cruelty to refuse him, ! No Butcher could have Thought of a more moving Expedient ! However *Amanda* continues obstinate, and is not in the usual Humour of the *Stage*. Upon this, like a well-bred Lover he seizes her by Force, and threatens to Kill her. *Nay struggle not for all's in Vain, or Death, or Victory, I am determin'd.* In this rencounter the Lady proves too nimble, and slips through his Fingers. Upon this disappointment, he cries, *there's Divinity about her, and she has dispens'd some Portion on't to me.* His Passion is Metamorphos'd in the Turn of a hand : He is refin'd into a *Platonick Admirer*, and goes off as like a *Town Spark* as you would wish, And so much for the *Poets* fine Gentleman.

I should now examine the *Relapser's Thoughts and Expressions*, which are two other Things of Consideration in a *Play*. The *Thoughts* or *Sentiments* are the *Expressions of the Manners*, as *Words* are of the *pass. &c.*

Thoughts. But the view of the *Characters* has in some Measure prevented this Enquiry. Leaving this Argument therefore, I shall consider his *Play* with respect to the *Three Unities* of Time, Place, and Action.

And here the *Reader* may please to take notice, that the Design of these Rules, is to conceal the Fiction of the *Stage*, to make the *Play* appear Natural, and to give it an Air of Reality, and *Conversation*.

The largest Compass for the first *Unity* is Twenty Four Hours: But a lesser proportion is more regular. To be exact, the Time of the History, or Fable, should not exceed that of the *Representation*: Or in other Words, the whole Business of the *Play*, should not be much longer than the Time it takes up in *Playing*.

The Second *Unity* is that of *Place*. To observe it, the *Scene* must not wander from one Town, or Country to another. It must continue in the same House, Street, or at farthest in the same City, where it was first laid. The Reason of this Rule depends upon the *First*. Now the Compass of *Time* being strait, that of *Space* must bear a Correspondent Proportion. Long Journeys in *Plays* are impracticable. The Distances of *Place* must be suited to Leisure, and Possibility, otherwise the supposition

position will appear unnatural and absurd.
The

Third *Unity* is that of *Action*; It consists in contriving the chief Business of the *Play* single, and making the Concerns of one Person distinguishably great above the rest. All the Forces of the *Stage* must as it were serve under one *General*: And the lesser Intrigues or Under-plots, have some Relation to the Main. The very Oppositions must be useful, and appear only to be Conquer'd, and Countermin'd. To represent Two considerable Actions independent of each other, Destroys the Beauty of Subordination, weakens the Contrivance, and dilutes the Pleasure. It splits the *Play*, and makes the *Poem* double. He that would see more upon this Subject may consult *Corneille*; to bring these Remarks to the Case in hand. And here we may observe how the *Relapser* fails in all the *Rules* above mention'd.

*Discourse
des Trois
Unitez.
pt. 3d.*

1st. His *Play* by modest Computation takes up a Weeks Work, but Five Days you must allow it at the lowest. One Day must be spent in the First, Second, and part of the Third *Act*, before Lord *Foplington* sets forward to Sir *Tunbelly*. Now the Length of the Distance, the Pomp of the Retinue, and the Niceness of the Person being consider'd; the Journey down, and

p. 88.

up again, cannot be laid under Four Days. To put this out of doubt, Lord Foplington, is particularly careful to tell Coupler, how concern'd he was not to overdrive, for fear of disordering his Coach-Horses. The Laws of Place, are no better observ'd than those of Time. In the Third *Act* the Play is in Town, in the Fourth *Act* 'tis stroll'd Fifty Miles off, and in the Fifth *Act* in London again. Here *Pegasus* stretches it to purpose! This Poet is fit to ride a Match with Witches. *Juliana Cox* never Switched a Broom-stock with more Expedition! This is exactly,

Titus at Walton Town, and Titus at Islington.

One would think by the probability of Matters, the Plot had been stolen from Dr. O——s.

The Poet's Success in the last Unity of Action is much the same with the former. *Lovelace*, *Amanda*, and *Berinthia*, have no share in the main Business. These Second-rate Characters are a detached Body: Their Interest is perfectly Foreign, and they are neither Friends nor Enemies to the Plot. *Young Fashion* does not so much as see them till the Close of the Fifth *Act*, and then they meet only to fill the Stage: And yet these

these *Persons* are in the *Poet's* account very considerable; Inſomuch that he has miſ-named his *Play* from the Figure of Two of them. This ſtrangenefs of *Persons*, diſtinct Company, and inconnexion of Affairs, deſtroys the Unity of the *Poem*. The contrivance is juſt as wiſe as it would be to cut a Diamond in two. There is a loſs of Luſtre in the Diviſion. Increasing the Number, abates the Value, and by making it more, you make it leſs.

Thus far I have examin'd the *Dramatick* Merits of the *Play*. And upon enquiry, it appears a Heap of Irregularities. There is neither Propriety in the *Name*, nor Contrivance in the *Plot*, nor Decorum in the *Characters*. 'Tis a thorough Contradiction to Nature, and impoſſible in *Time*, and *Place*. It's *Shining Graces*, as the Author *Prof.* calls them, are *Blasphemy* and *Bawdry*, together with a mixture of *Oaths*, and *Cursing*. Upon the whole; The *Relapſer's* Judgment, and his *Morals*, are pretty well adjusted. The *Poet*, is not much better than the *Man*. *ſee Comp. 2d.* As for the *Profane* part, 'tis hideous and ſuperlative. But this I have conſider'd elſewhere. All that I ſhall obſerve here is, that the Author was ſenſible of this Objection. His Defence in his *Preface* is moſt wretched: He pretends to know nothing of the Matter, and that 'tis all Printed;

Which only proves his Confidence equal to the rest of his Virtues. To out-face Evidence in this manner, is next to the affirming there's no such Sin as *Blasphemy*, which is the greatest Blasphemy of all. His Apology consists in railing at the *Clergy*; a certain Sign of ill Principles, and ill Manners. This He does at an unusual rate of Rudeness and Spite. He calls them the Saints with *Screw'd Faces*, and *Wry Mouths*. And after a great deal of scurrilous Abuse too gross to be mention'd, he adds; *If any Man happens to be offended at a Story of a Cock and a Bull, and a Priest and a Bulldog, I beg his Pardon, &c.* This is brave Bear-Garden Language! The Relapser would do well to transport his Muse to *Samourgan*. There 'tis likely he might find Leisure to lick his *Abortive Brat* into shape; And meet with proper Business for his Temper, and Encouragement for his Talent.

Prof.

An Academy in Lithuania, for the Education of Bears.

*Pere Au-
vill Voyage
on Divers
Etats, &c.
p. 240.*

CHAP. VI.

The Opinion of the Pagans, of the Church, and State, concerning the Stage.

HAVING in the foregoing Chapters discover'd some part of the Disorders of the *English Stage*; I shall in this Last, present the Reader with a short View of the Sense of *Antiquity*, To which I shall add some *Modern Authorities*; From all which it will appear that *Plays* have generally been look'd on as the *Nurseries of Vice*, the *Corrupters of Youth*, and the *Grievance of the Country* where they are suffer'd

This proof from *Testimony* shall be ranged under these three Heads.

Under the *First*, I shall cite some of the most celebrated *Heathen Philosophers*, *Orators*, and *Historians*; Men of the biggest Consideration, for *Sense*, *Learning*, and *Figure*. The

Second, Shall consist of the *Laws* and *Constitutions of Princes*, &c. The

Third, Will be drawn from *Church-Records*, from *Fathers*, and *Councils* of unexceptionable

*See Filmer's
Reference of
Plays p. 102.*

ceptionable Authority, both as to Persons, and Time.

1st. I shall produce some of the most celebrated Heathen Philosophers &c. To begin with *Plato*. 'This Philosopher tells us that *Plays* raise the Passions, and pervert the use of them, and by consequence are dangerous to Morality: For this Reason he banishes these Diversions his *Common-Wealth*.

Xenophon who was both a Man of Letters and a great General, commends the *Persians* for the Discipline of their Education. 'They won't (says he) so much as suffer their Youth to hear any thing that's Amorous or Tawdry. They were afraid want of Ballast might make them miscarry, and that 'twas dangerous to add weight to the Byass of Nature.

Aristotle lays it down for a Rule, that the Law ought to forbid Young People the seeing of *Comedies*. Such permissions not being safe till Age and Discipline had confirm'd them in sobriety, fortified their Virtue, and made them as it were proof against Debauchery. This Philosopher who had look'd as far into Humane Nature as any Man, observes farther, 'That the force of Musick and *Action* is very affecting. It commands the Audience and changes the Passions to

' a Resemblance of the Matter before them.
So that where the Representation is foul,
the Thoughts of the Company must suffer.

Tully cries out upon 'Licentious Plays Tusc. Quest. Lib. 4.
'and *Poems*, as the bane of Sobriety, and De Leg. Lib. 1.
'wise Thinking: That *Comedy* subsists upon
'on Lewdness, and that Pleasure is the
'Root of all Evil.

Livy, reports the Original of *Plays*
among the *Romans*. 'He tells us they
'were brought in upon the score of Religion,
'to pacifie the Gods, and remove a
'Mortality. But then He adds that the
'Motives are sometimes good, when the
'Means are stark naught: That the Remedy Dec. 1. Lib. 7.
in this case was worse than the
'Disease, and the Atonement more Infectious
'than the Plague.

Valerius Maximus, Contemporary with
Livy, gives much the same Account of
the rise of *Theatres* at *Rome*. 'Twas Devotion
which built them. And as for the Performances
of those Places, which *Mr. Dryden* calls the
Ornaments, this Author censures as the Blemishes
of *Peate*. And which is more, He affirms 'They
'were the Occasions of Civil Distractions;
'and that the *State* first Blush'd and
'then Bled, for the Entertainment. He Lib. 2. cap. 4.
concludes the consequences of *Plays* in-
'tolerable,

cap. 6.

‘tolerable; And that the *Massilienses* did well
 ‘in clearing the Country of them. *Seneca*
 ‘complains heartily of the Extravagance
 ‘and Debauchery of the Age: And how
 ‘forward People were to improve in that
 ‘which was naught. That scarce any Body
 ‘would apply themselves to the Study of
 ‘Nature and Morality, unless when the
 ‘*Play-House* was shut, or the Weather
 ‘foul. That there was no body to teach
 ‘*Philosophy*, because there was no body
 ‘to Learn it: But that the *Stage* had *Nur-*
 ‘*series*, and Company enough. This Mis-
 ‘application of time and Fancy, made
 ‘Knowledge in so ill a Condition. This
 ‘was the Cause the Hints of Antiquity
 ‘were no better pursued; that some In-
 ‘ventions were sunk, and that Humane
 ‘Reason grew Downwards rather than
 ‘otherwise. And elsewhere he avers that
 ‘there is nothing more destructive to Good
 ‘Manners than to run Idling to see *Sights*.
 ‘For there Vice makes an insensible Ap-
 ‘proach, and steals upon us in the Dis-
 ‘guise of pleasure.

Natural
Quest Lib.
 7. cap. 32.

Epist. 7.

Annal.
Lib. 14.
 cap. 14.

‘*Tacitus* relating how *Nero* hired de-
 ‘cay’d Gentlemen for the *Stage*, com-
 ‘plains of the Mismanagement; And lets
 ‘us know ’twas the part of a Prince to re-
 ‘leive their Necessity, and not to Tempt
 ‘it. And that his Bounty should rather
 ‘have

' have set them above an ill practice, than
' driven them upon't.

And in another place, He informs us
that, ' the German Women were Guarded
' against danger, and kept their Honour
' out of Harms-way, by having no Play-
Houses amongst them.

*De Mor.
German.
cap. 19.*

Plays, in the Opinion of the Judicious
Plutarch are dangerous to corrupt Young
People; And therefore *Stage-Poetry* when
it grows too hardy, and Licentious, ought
to be checkt. This was the Opinion of
these Celebrated *Authors* with respect to
Theatres: They Charge them with the
Corruption of Principles, and Manners,
and lay in all imaginable Caution against
them. And yet these Men had seldom
any thing but this World in their Scheme;
and form'd their Judgments only upon
Natural Light, and Common Experi-
ence. We see then to what sort of Con-
duct we are oblig'd. The Case is plain;
Unless we are little enough to renounce
our Reason, and fall short of Philosophy,
and live under the Pitch of *Heathenism*.

*Symposiac.
Lib. 7. De
Audiend.
Poet. p. 15.
Ed. par.*

To these Testimonies I shall add a Cou-
ple of Poets, who both seem good Judges
of the *Affair* in Hand.

The First is *Ovid*, who in his Book *De
Arte Amandi*, gives his Reader to under-
stand that the *Play-House* was the most like-
ly

ly Place for him to Forage in. Here would be choice of all sorts: Nothing being more common than to see Beauty surpriz'd, Women debauch'd, and Wenches Pick'd up at these Diversions.

Lib. 1.

Sed tu praeque curvis venerare Theatris,

Haec loca sunt voto fertiliora tuo.

— ruit ad celebres cultissima Femina
Ludos;

Copia judicium saepe morata meam est.

*Spectatum veniunt, veniunt Spectentur ut
ipse;*

Ille locus casti damna pudoris habet.

And afterwards relating the imperfect beginning of *Plays* at the Rape of the *Sabine Virgins*, he adds,

Scilicet ex illo solennia more Theatra

Nunc quoque formosis insidiosa manent.

This Author sometime after wrote the *Remedy of Love*. Here he pretends to Prescribe for Prudence, if not for Sobriety. And to this purpose, He forbids the seeing of *Plays*, and the reading of *Poets*, especially some of them. Such Recreations being apt to feed the *Distemper*, and make the *Patient Relapse*.

At

*At tanti tibi sit non indulgere Theatris
 Dum bene de vacuo Pectore cedat amor.
 Enervant animos Cithara, Cantusque, lyra-
 que
 Et vox, & numeris brachia mota suis.
 Illic assidue ficti saltantur amantis,
 Quid cautus, actor, quid juret, arte docet.*

*Remed.
 Amor.*

In his *De Tristibus*, He endeavours to make some Amends for his scandalous Poems, and gives *Augustus* a sort of Plan for a Publick Reformation. Amongst other Things, he advises the suppressing of Plays, as being the promoters of Lewdness, and Dissolution of Manners.

*Ut tamen hoc fatear ludi quoque semina Lib. 2.
 præbent
 Nequitia, tolli tota Theatra jube.*

To the Testimony of *Ovid*, I could add *Plautus*, *Propertius*, and *Juvenal*, but being not willing to overburthen the Reader, I shall content my self with the Plain-Dealer as one better known at Home.

This Poet in his Dedication to Lady B, some Eminent Procuress, pleads the Merits of his Function, and insists on being Billeted upon Free Quarter. Madam (says he) I think a Poet ought to be as free of
 your

Ep. Ded.

your Houses, as of the Play-Houses; since he contributes to the support of both; and is as necessary to such as you, as the Ballad-singer to the Pick-purse, in Convening the Cullies at the Theatres to be pick'd up, and Carried to a Supper, and Bed, at your Houses. This is frank Evidence, and ne're the less true, for the Air of a Jest.

I shall now in the Second

Place, proceed to the Censures of the State; And shew in a few Words how much the Stage stands discouraged by the Laws of other Countries and our own.

Plut. De.
Glor. A-
theniens.

To begin with the Athenians. This People tho' none of the worst Friends to the Play-House 'thought a Comedy so un-reputable a Performance, that they made 'a Law that no Judge of the *Areopagus* 'should make one.

Plut. La-
con Insti-
tut.

The Lacedemonians, who were remarkable for the Wisdom of their Laws, the Sobriety of their Manners, and their Breeding of brave Men. This Government would not endure the Stage in any Form, nor under any Regulation.

Cic. de Re-
pub. Lib.
& cited by,
St. Augu-
stine.
Lib. 2.
de civ. Dei.
cap. 13.

To pass on to the Romans. Tully informs us 'that their Predecessours counted 'all Stage-Plays uncreditable and Scandalous. In so much that any Roman who 'turn'd Actor was not only to be Degraded, 'but likewise as it were disincorporated, and

and unnaturalized by the Order of the Censors.

St. Augustine in the same Book, commends the Romans for refusing the *Jus Civitatis* to Players, for seizing their Freedoms, and making them perfectly Foreign to their Government.

We read in Livy that the Young People in Rome kept the *Fabula Atellanæ* to themselves. 'They would not suffer this

Dec. 1.
Libr. 7.

Diversion to be blemish'd by the Stage.

Ab Histri-
onibus Pol-
lui.

For this Reason, as the Historian observes, the Actors of the *Fabula Atellanæ* were neither expell'd their Tribe, nor refused to serve in Arms; Both which Penalties it appears the Common Players lay under.

In the Theodosian Code, Players are call'd *Personæ inhonestæ*; that is, to Translate it softly, persons Maim'd, and Blemish'd in their Reputation. Their Pictures might

XV. Cod.
Theod. Tit.
vii. p. 375.

be seen at the Play-House, but were not permitted to hang in any creditable Place of the Town. Upon this Text Gothofred

in loco Ho-
nesto.

tells us the Function of Players was counted scandalous by the Civil Law. L. 4. And that those who came upon the Stage to divert the people, had a mark of Infamy set upon them. *Famosi sunt ex Edicto.*

turpe mu-
nis.

I shall now come down to our own Constitution. And I find by 39

L. 1. Sect. 6.
de his qui
notantur
infamia.
Gothofred.

cap. 4. 1 Jac. cap. 7. That all Beat-

Ibid. p.
376.

R

wards,

wards, Common Players of Enterludes, Counterfeit Egyptians, &c. shall be taken, adjudged and deem'd Rogues, Vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and shall sustain all Pain and Punishment, as by this Act is in that behalf appointed. The Penalties are infamous to the last degree, and Capital too, unless they give over. 'Tis true, the first Act excepts those Players which belong to a Baron or other Personage of higher Degree, and are authorized to Play under the Hand and Seal of Armes of such Baron, or Personage. But by the later Statute this Priviledge of *Licensing* is taken away: And all of them are expressly brought under the Penalty without Distinction.

About the Year 1580, there was a Petition made to Queen *Elizabeth* for suppressing of Play-Houses. 'Tis somewhat remarkable, and therefore I shall transcribe some part of the Relation.

Many Godly Citizens, and other well disposed Gentlemen of London, considering that Play-Houses and Dicing-Houses, were Traps for Young Gentlemen and others, and perceiving the many Inconveniencies and great damage that would ensue upon the long suffering of the same, not only to particular Persons but to the whole City; And that it would also be a great disparagement to the Governours, and a dishonour to the Government

ment of this Honourable City, if they should any longer continue, acquainted some Pious Magistrates therewith, desiring them to take some course for the suppression of Common Play-Houses, &c. within the City of London and Liberties thereof; who thereupon made humble suit to Queen Elizabeth and her Privy Council, and obtain'd leave of her Majesty to thrust the Players out of the City, and to pull down all Play-Houses, and Dicing-Houses within their Liberties, which accordingly was effected. And the Play-Houses in Grace Church-street, &c. were quite put down and suppress'd.

Rawlidge
his Master,
lately found
out, &c.
P. 2, 3, 4.

I shall give a Modern Instance or two from France, and so conclude these Authorities.

Gazett
Rotterdam.
Dec. 20.
Paris.

In the Year 1696. we are inform'd by a Dutch Print, M. L' Archevêque appuyé, &c. 'That the Lord Arch-Bishop supported by the Interest of some Religious Persons at Court, has done his utmost to suppress the Publick Theaters by degrees; or at least to clear them of Profaneness.

And last Summer the Gazetts in the Paris Article affirm, 'That the King has order'd the Italian Players to retire out of France because they did not observe his Majesties Orders, but represented immodest Pieces, and did not correct their Obscenities, and indecent Gestures.

French
Amster-
dam Har-
lem Ga-
zetts.
Paris,
May 17.
1697.

The Opinion of the State

The same Intelligence the next Week after, acquaints us, that some Persons of the first Quality at Court, who were the Protectors of these Comedians, had solicited the French King to recal his Order against them, but their Request had no success.

And here to put an end to the Modern Authorities, I shall subjoyn a sort of *Parliamentary Letter* publish'd about two Years since by the Bishop of Arras in Flanders. The Reader shall have as much of it as concerns him in both Languages.

In the Year 1688. we are inform'd by a Dutch Paper, M. A. Archbishop of Arras, &c. That the Lord Archbishop supported by the Interest of some Religious Persons at Court, has done his utmost to suppress the Publick Theatre by degrees; or at least to clear them of Prophanities.

And last Summer the Gazette in the French Paper, That the King has ordered the Italian Players to retire out of France, because they did not observe his Majesty's Orders, but represented immorally, and did not correct their Objections, and in due Manner.

MAN.

MANDEMENT DE MONSEIGNEUR

L' Illuſtriſſime Et Reverendiſſime
EVE QUE D'ARRAS
CONTRE LA COMEDIE.

GUY DE SEVE DE ROCHE CHOUART
par la grace de Dieu & du Saint Siège Apo-
ſtolique Evêque d' Arras, Arous fideles de la Ville d'
Arras Salut & Benediction. Il faut ignorer ſa Re-
ligion pour ne pas connoître l' horreur qu' elle a mar-
quée dans tous les temps des Spectacles, & de la
Comedie en particulier. Les ſaints Peres la con-
damnent dans leurs écrits; Ils la regardent com-
me un reſte du paganisme, & Comme une école d'
impureté. L' Eglise l' a toujours regardée avec abo-
mination, & ſi elle n' a pas abſolument rejetté de
ſon ſein ceux qui exercent ce métier infame &
ſcandaleux, elle les prive publiquement des Sacre-
mens, & n' oublie rien pour marquer en toutes ren-
contres ſon averſion pour cet état & pour l' inſpirer
à ſes Enſans. Des Rituels de Diocèſes très reglés
les mettent au nombre des perſonnes que les Curés
ſont obligés de traiter comme excommuniés; Celui
de Paris les joint aux Sorciers, & aux Magiciens,
& les regarde comme manifeſtement infames; Le
Evêques les plus ſaints leur ſont reſuſer publiquement,
les Sacremens; Nous avons veu un des premiers
Evêques de France ne vouloir pas par cette raiſon re-
cevoir au mariage un homme de cet état; un autre
ne vouloir pas leur accorder la terre Sainte; Et dans

les Statuts d'un prelat bien plus illustre par son merite, par sa Pieté, & par l'austerité de sa vie que par la pourpre dont il est revêtu, on les trouve avec les concubinaires, les Usuriers, les Blasphémateurs, les Femmes debauchées, les excommuniés dénoncés, les Infames, les Simoniaques, & autres personnes scandaleuses mis au nombre de ceux à qui on doit refuser publiquement la Communion.

Il est donc impossible de justifier la Comedie sans vouloir condamner l'Eglise, les saints peres, les plus saint Prelats, mais il ne l'est pas moins de justifier ceux qui par leur assistance à ces spectacles non seulement prennent part au mal qui s'y fait, mais contribuent en même temps à retenir ces malheureux ministres de Satan dans une profession, qui les separant des Sacremens de l'Eglise les met dans un état perpetuel de peché & hors de salut s'ils ne l'abandonnent.-----

Et à egard des Comediens & Commediennes, Nous defendons très expressement à nos pasteurs & à nos Confesseurs des les recevoir aux Sacremens si cén'est qu'ils aient fait Penitence de leur peché, donné des preuves d'amendement, renoncé à leur Etat, & reparé pas une satisfaction publique telle que nous jugerons à propos de leur ordonner, le Scandale public qu'ils ont donné. Fait & ordonné à Arras le quatrième jour de Decembre mil six cent quatre-vingt quinze.

Trois Lettres Pastorales De Monseigneur L'Eveque D'Arras Sec.
A Delf.
1697.

Guy Evêque d'Arras

Et plus bas

Par Monseigneur

CARON.

In

In English thus,

*An Order of the most Illu-
strious and most Reverend
Lord Bishop of Arras a-
gainst Plays.*

GUY DE SEVE DE ROCHE
CHOUART by the grace of God,
' &c. Bishop of *Arras*. To all the Faithful
' in the Town of *Arras* Health and Bene-
' diction. A Man must be very Ignorant
' of his Religion, not to know the great
' disgust it has always declar'd, for *Pub-
lick Sights*, and for *Plays* in particular.
' The Holy *Fathers* condemn them in
' their Writings; They look upon them
' as reliques of Heathenism, and Schools of
' Debauchery. They have been always
' abominated by the Church; And not-
' withstanding those who are concern'd
' in this Scandalous Profession, are not
' absolutely expell'd by a Formal Excom-
' munication; yet She publicly refuses
' them the Sacraments, and omits nothing
' upon all Occasions, to shew her Aversion
' for this Employment, and to transfuse

' the same sentiments into her Children.
 ' The *Rituals* of the best govern'd Dioceses,
 ' have ranged the *Players* among those
 ' whom the Parish Priests are oblig'd to
 ' treat as Excommunicated Persons. The
 ' *Ritual* of *Paris* joyns them with Sorce-
 ' rers, and Magicians, and looks upon them
 ' as notoriously infamous; The most emi-
 ' nent Bishops for Piety, have publickly
 ' denied them the Sacraments: For this
 ' reason, we our selves have known one
 ' of the most considerable Bishops in *France*,
 ' turn back a *Player* that came to be Mar-
 ' ried; And an other of the same Order,
 ' refused to bury them in Consecrated
 ' Ground: And by the *Orders* of a Bishop,
 ' who is much more illustrious for his
 ' Worth, for his Piety, and the Strictness
 ' of his Life, than for the *Purple* in his
 ' Habit; They are thrown amongst For-
 ' nicators, Usurers, Blasphemers, Lewd
 ' Women, and declar'd Excommunicates,
 ' amongst the Infamous, and Simoniackal,
 ' and other Scandalous Persons who are
 ' in the List of those who ought publickly
 ' to be barr'd Communion,
 ' Unless therefore we have a mind to
 ' condemn the Church, the Holy Fathers,
 ' and the most holy Bishops, 'tis impossi-
 ' ble to justify *Plays*; neither is the De-
 ' fence of those lets impracticable, who
 ' by

' by their Countenance of these Diversions,
 ' not only have their share of the Mis-
 ' chief there done, but contribute at the
 ' same time to fix these unhappy Ministers
 ' of Satan in a Profession, which by de-
 ' priving them of the Sacraments of the
 ' Church, leaves them under a constant
 ' necessity of Sinning, and out of all hopes
 ' of being saved, unless they give it
 ' over.-----

From the general Unlawfulness of *Plays*,
 the Bishop proceeds to argue more strong-
 ly against seeing them at times which are
 more particularly devoted to Piety, and
 Humiliation: And therefore he strictly for-
 bids his Diocess the *Play-House* in *Advent*,
Lent, or under any publick *Calamity*. And
 at last concludes in this Manner.

' As for the Case of *Players* both Men,
 ' and Women, we expressly forbid all our
 ' Rectors, Pastors, and Confessours, to ad-
 ' mit them to the Sacraments, unless they
 ' shall repent them of their Crime, make
 ' proof of their Reformation, renounce
 ' their *Business*, and retrieve the Scandal
 ' they have given, by such publick Satisfa-
 ' ction as we shall think proper to injoyn
 ' them. Made and Decreed at *Arras* the
 ' fourth day of *December* 1695.

Guy Bishop of Arras. &c.

I shall now in the
Third Place, give a short Account of the
Sense of the *Primitive Church* concerning
the *Stage* : And first I shall instance in her
Councils.

Ann. 303.

Can. 67.

The Council of *Illiberis*, or *Collioure* in
Spain, decrees,

‘ That it shall not be lawful for any
‘ Woman who is either in full Communion
‘ or a probationer for Baptism, to Marry,
‘ or Entertain any *Comedians* or *Actors* ;
‘ whoever takes this Liberty shall be Ex-
‘ communicated.

Ann. 314.

Can. 5.

The First Council of *Arles*, runsthus,

‘ Concerning *Players*, we have thought
‘ fit to Excommunicate them as long as
‘ they continue to *Act*.

Ann. 452.

The Second Council of *Arles* made their
20th Canon to the same purpose, and al-
most in the same Words.

Ann. 397.

Can. 11.

The Third Council of *Carthage*, of which
St. *Augustine* was a Member, ordains,

‘ That the Sons of Bishops, or other
‘ Clergy-men should not be permitted to
‘ furnish out Publick *Shews*, or *Plays* * or
‘ be present at them : Such sort of Pagan
‘ *Entertainments* being forbidden all the
‘ *Laity*. It being always unlawful for all
‘ Christians to come amongst *Blasphemers*.

* *Secularia*
spectacula,
which ma-
nifestly
compre-
hends the
Stage.

This

This last branch shews the *Canon* was Principally levelld against the *Play-House*. And the reason of the Prohibition, holds every jot as strong against the *English*, as against the *Roman Stage*.

By the 35th *Canon* of this *Council* 'tis decreed,

' That *Actors* or others belonging to the *Stage*, who are either *Converts*, or *Penitents*, upon a Relapse, shall not be denied Admission into the Church. This is farther proof, that *Players* as long as they kept to their Employment were barr'd *Communion*.

Another *African Council* declares,

' That the Testimony of People of ill Reputation, of *Players*, and others of such scandalous Employments, shall not be admitted against any Person. Ann. 424.
Can. 96.

The Second *Council* of *Chalon* sets forth.

' That Clergy men ought to abstain from all over-engaging Entertainments in Musick or Show, (*Oculorum auriumque illecebris.*) And as for the Smutty, and Licentious Insolence of *Players*, and Buffoons, let them not only decline the Hearing it themselves, but likewise conclude the *Lairy* oblig'd to the same Conduct. Council.
Cabilon.
Ann. 813.
Can. 9.

I could cite many more Authorities of this Kind, but being conscious of the Necessity

ness of the *Age*, I shall forbear, and proceed to the Testimony of the *Fathers*.

To begin with *Theophilus* Bishop of *Antioch*, who lived in the Second Century.

*Litr. 3. ad
Autol.*

* *Specta-
cula.*

‘Tis not lawful (says he) for us to be present at the *Prizes* of your *Gladiators*, lest by this means we should be *Accessaries* to the Murthers there committed. Neither dare we presume upon the Liberty of your other *Shews*, lest our Senses should be tinctur’d, and disoblig’d, with Indecency, and Profaneness. The Tragical Distractions of *Terens* and *Thyestes*, are Nonsense to us. We are for seeing no Representations of Lewdness. The Stage-Adulteries of the *Gods*, and *Hero’s*, are unwarrantable Entertainments: And so much the worse, because the Mercenary *Players* set them off with all the Charms and Advantages of Speaking. God forbid that *Christians* who are remarkable for Modesty, and Reserv’dness; who are obliged to Discipline, and train’d up in Virtue, God forbid I say, that we should dishonour our Thoughts, much less our Practice, with such Wickedness as This!

Tertullian who liv’d at the latter end of this Century is copious upon this Subject; I shall Translate but some Part of it.

it. In his Apologetick, He thus addresseth Chap. 38.
the Heathens.

' We keep off from your publick *Shews*,
' because we cannot understand the War-
' rant of their Original. There's Super-
' stition and Idolatry in the Case: And
' we dislike the Entertainment because we
' dislike the reason of it's Institution. Be-
' sides, We have nothing to do with the
' Frenies of the *Race-Ground*, the Lewd-
' ness of the *Play-House*, or the Barbari-
' ties of the *Beer-Garden*. The *Epicureans*
' had the Liberty to state the Notion,
' and determine the Object of Pleasure.
' Why can't we have the same Privilege?
' What Offence is it then if we differ from
' you in the Idea of Satisfaction? If we
' won't understand to brighten our Hu-
' mour, and live pleasantly, where's the
' harm? If any body has the worst on't,
' 'tis only our selves.

His Book *de Spectaculis* was wrote on
purpose to dissuade the Christians, from the
publick Diversions of the *Heathens*, of
which the *Play-House* was one. In his
first Chapter He gives them to under-
stand, ' That the Tenour of their Faith,
' the Reason of Principle, and the Order
' of Discipline, had barr'd them the Enter-
' tainments of the *Town*. And therefore
' He exhorts them to refresh their Me-
' mories,

mories to run up to their Baptism, and re-
 'collect their first Engagements. For
 'without care, Pleasure is a strange be-
 'witching Thing. When it gets the As-
 'cendant, 'twill keep on Ignorance for
 'an Excuse of Liberty, make a Man's Con-
 'science wink, and suborn his Reason against
 'himself.

Chap. 3

But as he goes on, some Peoples Faith
 'is either too full of Scruples, or too bar-
 'ren of Sense. Nothing will serve to set-
 'tle them but a plain Text of Scripture:
 'They hover in uncertainty because 'tis
 'not said as expressly thou shalt not go to
 'the Play-House, as 'tis thou shalt not Kill.
 'But this looks more like Fencing than Ar-
 'gument. For we have the Meaning of
 'the Prohibition tho not the Sound, in the
 First Psalm: *Blessed is the Man that walks
 not in the Council of the Ungodly, nor stands
 in the way of Sinners, nor sits in the Seat of the
 Scornful.*

Ibid.

Chap. 10.

The Censors whose Business 'twas to
 'take care of Regularity and Manners,
 'look'd on these Play-Houses as no other
 'than Batteries upon Virtue and Sobriety,
 'and for this Reason often pull'd them
 'down before they were well built. So
 'that here we can argue from the Pre-
 'cedents of meer Nature, and plead the
 'Heathens against themselves. Upon this
 'view

'view *Pompey* the Great, when he built
 'his *Dramatick Bawdy-House*, clapp'd a
 'Chappel a Top on't. He would not let it
 'go under the Name of a Play-House, but
 'conven'd the People to a Solemn Dedi-
 'cation, and called it *Venus's Temple*; Gi-
 'ving them to understand at the same
 'time that there were *Benches* under it for
 'Diversi^{on}. He was afraid if he had not
 'gone this way to Work, The *Censors*
 'might afterwards have razed the Monu-
 'ment, and branded his Memory. Thus a
 'Scandalous Pile of Building was pro-
 'tected: The Temple cover'd the Play-
 'House, and Discipline was baffled by
 'Superstition. But the Design is notably
 'suited to the Patronage of *Bacchus* * and
 'Venus. These two Confederate Devils
 'of Lust and Intemperance, do well toge-
 'ther. The very Functions of the *Players*
 'resemble their *Protectors*, and are in-
 'stances of Service and Acknowledgment.
 'Their Motion is effeminate, and their
 'Gestures vicious and Significant: And
 'thus they worship the Luxury of one
 'Idol, and the Lewdness of the other.
 'And granting the Regards of Quality,
 'the Advantages of Age, or Temper,
 'may fortifie some People; granting Mo-
 'delty secur'd, and the Diversi^{on} as it
 'were refin'd by this Means; Yet a Man
 'must

*The Play-
 houses were
 dedicated
 to Bacchus.

Ibid. cap.
 15.

must not expect to stand by perfectly un-
 moved, and impregnable. No body can
 be pleas'd without Sensible Impressions.
 Nor can such Perceptions be received
 without a Train of Passions attending
 them. These Consequences will be sure
 to work back upon their Causes, sollicite
 the Fancy, and heighten the Original
 Pleasure. But if a Man pretends to be a
Stoick at Plays, he falls under another
 Imputation. For where there is no Im-
 pression, there can be no Pleasure: And
 then the Spectator is very much Im-
 pertinent, in going where he gets no-
 thing for his Pains. And if this were
 fall; I suppose Christians have something
 else to do than to ramble about to no pur-
 pose.

Ibid. cap.
 22.

Even those very Magistrates who abet
 the Stage, discountenance the Players.
 They stigmatize their Character, and
 cramp their Freedoms. The whole
 Tribe of them is thrown out of all Ho-
 nour and Privilege. They are neither
 suffer'd to be Lords, nor Gentlemen:
 To come within the Senate, or harangue
 the People, or so much as to be Members
 of a Common-Council. Now what Caprice
 and Inconsistency is this! To love what
 we punish, and lessen those whom we ad-
 mire! To cry up the Mystery, and cen-
 sure

sure the practise; For a Man to be as it
were eclips'd upon the score of Merit is
certainly an odd sort of Justice! True.
But the Inference lies stronger another
way. What a Confession then is this of
an Ill Business; when the very Excellen-
cy of it is not without Infamy?

Since therefore Humane Prudence has
thought fit to degrade the Stage, not-
withstanding the Divertingness of it.

Since Pleasure can't make them an Inte-
rest Here, nor shelter them from Censure. *Ibid. cap. 23.*

How will they be able to stand the shock
of Divine Justice, and what Reasoning
have they Reason to expect Hereafter?

All things consider'd 'tis no wonder
such People should fall under Possession.
God knows we have had a sad Example

of this already. A certain Woman went
to the Play-House, and brought the Devil *Ibid. cap. 26.*

Home with Her. And when the Un-
clean Spirit was press'd in the Exorcism,

and ask'd how he durst attack a Christi-
an. I have done nothing (says he) but
what I can justify. For I seiz'd her up-

on my own Ground. Indeed, how ma-
ny Instances have we of others who have
apostatiz'd from God, by this Correspon-

dence with the Devil? What Communion
has Light with Darkness? No Man can serve

two Masters, nor have Life and Death in
him at the same time.

Ibid.

cap.

27. 'Will you not then avoid this Seat of
'Infection? The very Air suffers by their
'Impurities; And they almost pronounce
'the Plague. What tho' the performance
'may be in some measure pretty and enter-
'taining? What tho' Innocence, yes and
'Virtue too, shines through some part of it?
'Tis not the custom to prepare Poyson
'unpalatable, nor make up Ratsbane with
'Rhubarb and Sena. No. To have the
'Mischief speed, they must oblige the
'Sense, and make the Dose pleasant.
'Thus the Devil throws in a Cordial
'Drop to make the Draught go down;
'And steals some few Ingredients from the
'Dispensatory of Heaven. In short, look
'upon all the engaging Sentences of the
'Stage; Their flights of Fortitude, and
'Philosophy, the Loftiness of their Stile,
'the Musick of the Cadence, and
'the Finess of the Conduct; Look upon
'it only I say as Honey dropping from
'the Bowels of a Toad, or the Bag of a
'Spider: Let your Health over-rule your
'Pleasure, and don't die of a little *Liquor-*
'*isbness*.

Ibid. cap.

28.

'In earnest Christian, our time for En-
'tertainment is not yet: you are too cra-
'ving and ill managed if you are so violent
'for

for Delight. And let me tell you, no
 wiser than you should be, if you count
 such things Satisfaction. Some Philoso-
 phers placed their Happiness in bare
 Tranquillity. Easiness of Thought, and
 Absence of Pain, was all they aim'd at.
 But this it seems won't Satisfie Thee.
 Thou liest sighing and hankering after
 the *Play-House*. Prethee recollect thy self:
 Thou knowest Death ought to be our
 Pleasure; And therefore I hope Life may
 be a little without it. Are not our De-
 sires the same with the Apostles, *To be*
Dissolv'd and to be with Christ? Let us act
 up to our pretensions, and let Pleasure
 be true to Inclination.

But if you can't wait for Delight; if *ibid. cap.*
 you must be put into present Possession, ²⁹
 wee'l cast the Cause upon that Issue.
 Now were you not unreasonable, you
 would perceive the Liberalities of Provi-
 dence, and find your self almost in the
 midst of Satisfaction. For what can be
 more transporting than the Friendship of
 Heaven, and the Discovery of Truth, than
 the Sense of our Mistakes, and the Par-
 don of our Sins? What greater Pleasure
 can there be, than to scorn being *Pleas'd*?
 to condemn the World? And to be a
 Slave to Nothing? 'Tis a mighty satis-
 faction I take it, to have a clear Conscience;

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‘To make Life no Burthen, nor Death
 ‘any Terror ! To trample upon the
 ‘Pagan Deities ; To batter Principali-
 ‘ties and Powers, and force the Devils to
 ‘Resign ! * These are the Delights, these
 ‘are the noble Entertainments of Christi-
 ‘ans : And besides the advantage of the
 ‘Quality, they are always at hand, and
 ‘cost us nothing.

* By Exor-
 cisms.

Lib. 3.

Padag.

Ann. 204.

cap. 11.

Clemens Alexandrinus affirms ‘ That the
 ‘Circus and Theatre may not improperly
 ‘be call’d the Chair of Pestilence. —

‘Away then with these Lewd, Ungodly
 ‘Diversions, and which are but Imperti-
 ‘nence at the Best. What part of Impu-
 ‘dence either in words or practice, is omit-
 ‘ted by the Stage ? Don’t the Buffoons
 ‘take almost all manner of Liberties, and
 ‘plunge through Thick and Thin, to make
 ‘a jest ? Now those who are affected with a
 ‘vicious satisfaction, will be haunted with
 ‘the Idea, and spread the Infection. But
 ‘if a man is not entertain’d to what pur-
 ‘pose should he go Thither ? Why should
 ‘he be fond where he finds nothing, and
 ‘court that which sleeps upon the Sense ?
 ‘If ’tis said these Diversions are taken on-
 ‘ly to unbend the Mind, and refresh Na-
 ‘ture a little. To this I answer, That
 ‘the spaces between Business should not
 ‘be

'be fill'd up with such Rubbish. A wife
'man has a Guard upon his Recreations,
'and always prefers the Profitable to the
'Pleasant.

Mimicus Felix delivers his Sense in these Words. Ann. 206.

'As for us, who rate our Degree by
'our Virtue, and value our selves more
'upon our Lives, than our Fortunes; we
'decline your Pompous Shows, and pub-
'lick Entertainments. And good Reason
'we have for our Aversion. These Things
'have their Rise from Idols, and are the
'Train of a false Religion. The Plea-
'sure is ill Descended, and likewise Viti-
'ous and ensnaring. For who can do less
'than abominate, the Clamorous Disor-
'ders of the Race-Ground, and the pro-
'fession of Murder at the Price? And
'for the Stage, there you have more
'Lewdness, tho' not a jot less of Dista-
'ction. Sometimes your *Mimicks*, are so
'Scandalous and Expressing, that 'tis almost
'hard to distinguish between the Fact and
'the Representation. Sometimes a Lucra-
'tious Actor shall whine you into Love,
'and give the Disease that he Counterfeits.
'So *Cyprian* or the Author of *Spectaculis*,
will furnish us farther.

Here this Father argues against those
who thought the Play-House no unlawful

Diversion, because 'twas not Condemn'd
 by exprefs *Scripture*. 'Let meer Modesty
 (says he) supply the *Holy Text*: And
 'let *Nature* govern where *Revelation*
 'does not reach. Some Things are too
 'black to lie upon *Paper*, and are more
 'strongly forbidden, because unmention'd.
 'The Divine Wisdom must have had a
 'low Opinion of *Christians*, had it descen-
 'ded to particulars in this Case. Silence
 'is sometimes the best Method for Autho-
 'rity. To forbid often puts People in
 'mind of what they should not do; And
 'thus the force of the Precept is lost by
 'naming the Crime. Besides, what need
 'we any farther Instruction? Discipline
 'and general Restraint makes up the
 'Meaning of the Law; and Common Rea-
 'son will tell you what the *Scripture* has
 'left unsaid. I would have every one
 'examine his own Thoughts, and inquire
 'at Home into the Duties of his Profes-
 'sion. This is a good way to secure
 'him from Indecency. For those Rules
 'which a Man has work'd out for him-
 'self, he commonly makes most use of. . . .
 And after having describ'd the infamous
 Diversions of the *Play-House*; He expostu-
 lates in this Manner.

'What business has a Christian at such
 'Places as these? A Christian who has not
 'the

' the Liberty so much, as to think of an
 ' ill Thing. Why does he entertain him-
 ' self with Lowd Representations? Has
 ' he a mind to discharge his Modesty,
 ' and be flesh'd for the *Practice*? Yes, this
 ' is the Consequence. By using to see these
 ' Things, hee'l learn to do them. —
 ' What need I mention the Levities, and
 ' Impertinence in *Comedies*, or the ranting
 ' Distractions of *Tragedy*? Were these
 ' Things unconcern'd with Idolatry, Chri-
 ' stians ought not to be at them. For
 ' were they not highly Criminal, the Fool-
 ' ery of them is egregious, and unbecom-
 ' ing the Gravity of *Believers*. —

' As I have often said these Foppish,
 ' these pernicious Diversions, must be a-
 ' voided. We must set a Guard upon
 ' our Senses, and keep the Sentinel always
 ' upon Duty. To make Vice familiar to
 ' the ear, is the way to recommend it.
 ' And since the mind of Man has a Natu-
 ' ral Bent to Extravagance; how is it
 ' likely to hold out under Example, and
 ' Invitation? If you push that which re-
 ' sists already, whither will it tumble?
 ' In earnest, we must draw off our Inclina-
 ' tions from these Vanities. A Christian
 ' has much better *Sights* than these to
 ' look at. He has solid Satisfaction in his
 ' Power,

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Power, which will please and improve
him at the same time.

Would a Christian be agreeably Refresh'd? Let him read the *Scriptures*; Here the Entertainment will suit his Character, and be big enough for his Quality.---Beloved, how noble, how moving, how profitable a pleasure is it to be thus employed? To have our Expectations always in prospect, and be intent on the Glories of Heaven?

He has a great deal more upon this Subject in his *Epistles* to *Donatus* and *Eucarius*, which are undoubtedly genuine. The later being somewhat remarkable, I shall Translate part of it for the Reader.

Dear Brother, your usual Kindness, together with your desire of relieving your own Modesty and mine, has put you upon asking my Thoughts concerning a certain *Player* in your Neighbourhood, whether such a Person ought to be allow'd the Privilege of *Communion*: This Man it seems continues in his Scandalous Profession, and keeps a Nursery under him. He teaches that which 'twas a Crime in him to learn, sets up for a Master of Debauch, and Propagates the lewd Mystery. The Case standing thus, 'tis my Opinion that the Admission of such a *Member* would be a Breach of the Discipline

' Discipline of the Gospel, and a Presump-
' tion upon the Divine Majesty: Neither
' do I think it fit the Honour of the Church
' should suffer by so Infamous a Corre-
' spondence.

of *Lactantius's* Testimony shall come next.

This Author in his *Divine Institutions*, Lib. 6.
which he Dedicates to *Constantine* the cap. 20.
Great, cautions the Christians against the
Play-House, from the Disorders, and danger
of those places. For as he observes.

of The debauching of Virgins, and the
' Amours of Strumpets, are the Subject
' of *Comedy*. And here the Rule is, the
' more Rhetorick the more Mischief, and
' the best *Poets* are the worst Common-
' Wealths-men. For the Harmony and
' Ornament of the Composition serves
' only to recommend the Argument, to
' fortifie the Charm, and engage the Me-
' mory. At last he concludes with this
' advice.

of Let us avoid therefore these Diversions,
' lest somewhat of the Malignity should
' seize us. Our Minds should be quiet
' and Compos'd, and not over-run with
' Amusements. Besides, a Habit of Plea-
' sure is an ensnaring Circumstance. 'Tis Ibid. cap. 21.
' apt to make us forget God, and grow cool
' in the Offices of Virtue.

' Should

Should a Man have a Stage at Home,
 would not his Reputation suffer extream-
 ly, and all people count him a notorious
 Libertine? most undoubtedly. Now the
 Place does not alter the Property. The
 Practice at the *Play-House* is the same
 thing, only there he has more Company
 to keep him in Countenance.

A well work'd *Poem* is a powerful
 piece of Imposture: It masters the Fan-
 cy, and hurries it no body knows whi-
 ther. — If therefore we would be go-
 vern'd by Reason let us stand off from
 the Temptation, such Pleasures can have
 no good Meaning. Like delicious Mor-
 sels they subdue the Palate, and flatter
 us only to cut our Throats. Let us pre-
 fer Reality to Appearance, Service, to
 Show; and Eternity to Time.

Ibid. cap.
22.

As God makes Virtue the Condition
 of Glory, and trains men up to Hap-
 piness by Hardship and Industry.
 So the Devil's Road to Destruction lies
 through Sensuality and *Epicurism*. And
 as pretended Evils lead us on to un-
 counterfeited Bliss, so Visionary Satis-
 factions are the causes of Real Misery.
 In short, These Inviting Things are all
 stratagem. Let us take care the soft-
 ness and Importunity of the Pleasure
 does not surprise us, nor the Bait bring
 us

us within the snare. The Senses are more than *Our Works*, and should be defended accordingly.

I shall pass over St. *Ambrose*, and go *In Psal.* on to St. *Chrysostom*. This Father is copious upon the Subject, I could translate some *Sheets* from him were it necessary.

But length being not my Business, a few Lines may serve to discover his Opinion. His 13. *Homily ad Populum Antiochenum*, runs thus.

Most People fancy the Unlawfulness of going to *Plays* is not clear. But by their

favour, a world of Disorders are the Consequences of such a Liberty. For

frequenting the *Play-House* has brought Whoring and Ribaldry into Vogue, and

finish'd all the parts of Debauchery.

Afterwards he seems to make the supposition better than the *Fact*, and argues upon a feign'd Case.

Let us not only avoid downright Sinning, but the Tendencies to it. Some Indifferent Things are fatal in the Consequence, and strike us at the Rebound.

Now who would chuse his standing within an Inch of a Fall; or swim upon the Verge of a Whirlpool? He that walks upon a Precipice, shakes tho' he does not tumble. And commonly his Concern brings him to the Bottom. The Case is much

the

the

' the same in Reference to Conscience, and
 ' Morality. He that won't keep his Di-
 ' stance from the Gulph, is oftentimes
 ' suck'd in by the Eddy; and the least
 ' oversight is enough to undo Him.

In his 37 Homily upon the Eleventh
 Chapter of St. *Matthew*, he declaims more
 at large against the Stage.

' Smuttry Songs (says he) are much
 ' more abominable than Stench and Or-
 ' dure. And which is most to be lament-
 ' ed, you are not at all uneasy at such
 ' Licentiousness. You Laugh when you
 ' should Frown; and Commend what
 ' you ought to abhor. Heark you, you
 ' can keep the Language of your own
 ' House in order: If your Servants or
 ' your Childrens Tongues run Riot, they
 ' presently smart for't. And yet at the
 ' Play-House you are quite another Thing.
 ' These little Buffoons have a strange As-
 ' cendent: A luscious Sentence is huge-
 ' ly welcome from their Mouth: And in-
 ' stead of Censure, they have thanks and
 ' encouragement for their Pains. Now
 ' if a Man would be so just as to won-
 ' der at himself, here's Madness, and Con-
 ' tradiction in Abundance.

' But I know you'll say what's this to
 ' me, I neither sing nor pronounce, any of
 ' this Lewd stuff? Granting your Plea,
 ' what

‘ what do you get by’t? If you don’t re-
‘ peat these Scurrilities, you are very wil-
‘ ling to hear them. Now whether the
‘ Ear, or the Tongue is mismanaged, comes
‘ much to the same reckoning. The diffe-
‘ rence of the *Organ*, does not alter the
‘ Action so mightily, as you may imagine.
‘ But pray how do you prove you don’t re-
‘ peat them? They may be your Discourse,
‘ or the Entertainments of your Closet for-
‘ ought we know to the contrary. This
‘ is certain; you hear them with Pleasure
‘ in your Face, and make it your Bu-
‘ siness to run after them: And to my
‘ Mind, these are strong Arguments of your
‘ Approbation,

‘ I desire to ask you a Question. Sup-
‘ pose you hear any Wretches Blaspheme,
‘ are you in any Rapture about it? And
‘ do your Gestures appear Airy, and obli-
‘ ged? Far from it. I doubt not but your
‘ Blood grows Chill, and your Ears are stoppt
‘ at the Presumption. And what’s the Rea-
‘ son of this Aversion in your Behaviour?
‘ Why ’tis because you don’t use to Blas-
‘ pheme, your self. Pray clear your self
‘ the same way from the Charge of Obsce-
‘ nity. We’ll then believe you don’t talk
‘ Smut, when we perceive you careful not
‘ to hear it. Lewd Sonnets, and Serenades
‘ are quite different from the Prescriptions
‘ of

'of Virtue. This is strange Nourishment
 'for a Christian to take in! I don't won-
 'der you should lose your Health, when
 'you feed thus Foul. It may be Chastity
 'is no such easy Task! Innocence moves
 'upon an Ascent, at least for some time.
 'Now those who are always Laughing
 'can never strain up Hill. If the best pre-
 'parations of Care will just do, what must
 'become of those that are dissolv'd in Plea-
 'sure, and lie under the Instructions of De-
 'bauchery? ----- Have you not heard how
 'that St. Paul exhorts us to *rejoyce in the*
 '*Lord?* He said *in the Lord*; not in the Devil.
 'But alas! what Leisure have you to mind
 'St. Paul? How should you be sensible of
 'your Faults, when your Head is always
 'kept Hot, and as it were intoxicated with
 'Buffooning? ----- He goes on, and
 lashes the Impudence of the Stage with a
 great deal of Satyr and Severity; and at
 last proposes this Objection.

'You'll say, I can give you many In-
 'stances where the *Play-House* has done no
 'Harm. Don't mistake. Throwing away
 'of Time and ill Example, has a great deal
 'of Harm in't; and thus far you are guil-
 'ty at the best. For granting your own
 Virtue impenetrable, and out of Reach,
 Granting the Protection of your Temper
 has brought you off unhurt, are all People
 thus

thus Fortified? By no means. However,
 'many a weak Brother has ventur'd after
 'you, and miscarried upon your *Precedent*.
 'And since you make others thus *Faulty*,
 'how can you be *Innocent* your self? All
 'the People undone There, will lay their
 'Ruin at your Door. The Company are
 'all Accessary to the Mischief of the Place.
 'For were there no *Audience*, we should
 'have no *Acting*. And therefore those
 'who joyn in the Crime, will ne'er be part-
 'ed in the Punishment. Granting your
 'Modesty has secur'd you, which by the
 'way I believe nothing of; yet since many
 'have been debauch'd by the *Play-House*,
 'you must expect a severe Reckoning for
 'giving them Encouragement. Tho' after
 'all, as Virtuous as you are, I doubt not,
 'you wou'd have been much Better, had
 'you kept away.

'In fine, Let us not dispute to no pur-
 'pose; The Practice won't bear a Defence!
 'Where the Cause is naught 'tis in vain to
 'rack our Reason, and strain for Pretences.
 'The best excuse for what is past, is to
 'stand clear from the Danger, and do so no
 'more.

One citation more from *St. Chrysostom*,
 and I take leave. In the Preface of his Com-
 mentary upon *St. John's Gospel* speaking of
Plays and other Publick *Shews*, he has these
 words.

But

‘But what need I branch out the Lewd-
 ‘ness of those *Spectacles*, and be particular
 ‘in Description? For what’s there to be
 ‘mer with but Lewd Laughing, but Smut,
 ‘Railing, and Buffoonry? In a word.
 ‘Tis all Scandal and Confusion. Observe
 ‘me, I speak to you all; Let none who
 ‘partake of this *Holy-Table*, unqualifie
 ‘themselves with such Mortal Diver-
 ‘sions.

St. Hierom on the 1st Verse, 32 *Psal*.
 makes this Exposition upon the Text.

‘Some are delighted with the Satisfacti-
 ‘ons of the World, some with the *Circus*,
 ‘and some with the *Theatre*: But the *Psal*-
 ‘mist commands every good Man to de-
 ‘light himself in the Lord. For as *Isaiah*
 ‘speaks, *Wo to them that put bitter for sweet;*
 ‘and *sweet for bitter.* And in his *Epistles* he
 cautions the Ladies against having any
 thing to do with the *Play-House*, against
 Lewd Songs, and Ill Conversation. Be-
 cause they set ill Humours at work, Caress
 the Fancy, and make Pleasure a Convey-
 ance for Destruction.

Ep 9. 12.
Advers.
Jovinian.
Lib. 2.
cap. 7.

In the 6th. Book of his Commentary on
Ezekiel he lets us understand; ‘That
 ‘when we depart out of *Egypt* we must
 ‘refine our Inclinations, and change our
 ‘Delights into Aversion. And after some
 ‘other Instances, He tells us we must
 ‘decline

Chap. 20.

decline the *Theatrus*, and all other dangerous Diversions, which stain the Innocence of the Soul, and slip into the Will through the Senses.

St. *Augustine* in his 5th Epistle to *Marcellinus* will afford us something upon the same Argument.

The prosperity of Sinners is their greatest Unhappiness. If one may say so, They are most Punish'd when they are overlook'd. By this means their bad Temper is encourag'd, and they are more inclin'd to be false to themselves; And we know an Enemy *within*, is more dangerous than one *without*. But the perverse Reasonings of the Generality, make different Conclusions. They fancy the World goes wonderfully well when People make a Figure. When a Man is a Prince in his Fortune, but a Begger in his Virtue; Has a great many fine Things about him, but not so much as one good Quality to deserve them. When the *Play-Houses* go up, and Religion goes down. When Prodigality is admir'd, and Charity laugh'd at. When the *Players* can revel with the Rich Man's purse, and the Poor have scarce enough to keep Life and Soul together. — When God suffers these Things to flourish, we may be sure he is most Angry. Present Im-

T

puniry,

‘punity, is the deepest Revenge. But
 ‘when he cuts off the Supplies of Luxury,
 ‘and disables the Powers of Extravagance,
 ‘then as one may say, he is mercifully severe.

cap. 33.

In his 1st. Book *de consensu Evangelistarum*, He answers an Objection of the
Heathens, and comes up to the Case in Hand.

‘Their Complaint as if the Times
 ‘were less happy since the Appearance of
 ‘Christianity is very unreasonable. Let them
 ‘read their own Philosophers: There they’ll
 ‘find those very Things censured, which
 ‘they now are so uneasy to part with:
 ‘This Remark must shut up their Mouths,
 ‘and convince them of the Excellency of
 ‘our Religion. For pray what Satisfac-
 ‘tions have they lost? None that I know
 ‘of, excepting some Licentious ones,
 ‘which they abused to the Dishonour of
 ‘their Creatour. But it may be the Times
 ‘are bad because the *Theaters* are Tum-
 ‘bling almost every where. The *Thea-*
 ‘*ters* those Cages of Uncleaness, and pub-
 ‘lick Schools of Debauchery. — And
 ‘what’s the Reason of their running to
 ‘Ruine? Why ’tis the Reformation of
 ‘the Age: ’Tis because those Lewd Pra-
 ‘ctices are out of Fashion, which first built
 ‘and kept them in Countenance. Their
 ‘own *Tully’s* Commendation of the *Astor*
 ‘*Roscius* is remarkable. He was so much

‘a Master (says he) that none but him-
 ‘self was worthy to Tread the Stage. And
 ‘on the other hand, so good a Man, that
 ‘he was the most unfit Person of the Gang
 ‘to come There. And is not this a plain
 ‘Confession of the Lewdness of the Play-
 ‘House; And that the better a Man was,
 ‘the more he was obliged to forbear it?’

I could go on much farther with St.
Augustine, but I love to be as brief as may
 be. I could likewise run through the
 succeeding *Centuries*, and collect Evidence
 all along. But I conceive the best Ages,
 and the biggest Authorities, may be suffici-
 ent: And these the Reader has had already.
 However, one Instance more from the *Mo-
 derns* may not be amiss. *Didacus de Tapia* an
 eminent *Spaniard*, shall close the Evidence.
 This Author in debating the Question whe-
 ther *Players* might be admitted to the Sa-
 crament, amongst other things encounters
 an Objection. Some People it seems pre-
 tended there was some good to be learn’d at
 the *Play-House*. To these, he makes this reply.

‘Granting your Supposition, (says he)
 ‘your Inference is naught. Do People use
 ‘to send their Daughters to the *Stews* for
 ‘Discipline? And yet it may be, they
 ‘might meet some there lamenting their
 ‘own Debauchery. No Man will breed
 ‘his Son upon the *High-way*, to harden his

*Didac, &c.
in D. Thom.
p. 546.*

‘ Courage; Neither will any one go on
‘ board a Leaky Vessel, to learn the Art of
‘ shifting in a Wreck the better. My con-
‘ clusion is, let no body go to the Infamous
‘ *Play-House*. A place of such staring Con-
‘ tradiction to the Strictness and Sobriety of
‘ Religion: A Place hated by God, and haunt-
‘ ed by the Devil. Let no man I say learn to
‘ relish any thing that’s said there; For ’tis
‘ all but Poyson handsomly prepared.

Thus I have presented the *Reader* with
a short View of the Sense of *Christianity*.
This was the opinion of the *Church* for
the first 500 Years. And thus she has
Censured the *Stage* both in *Councils*,
and Single *Authorities*. And since the Sa-
tyr of the *Fathers* comes full upon the
Modern Poets, their Caution must be ap-
plicable. The parity of the Case makes
their Reasons take place, and their Autho-
rity revive upon us. If we are *Christians*,
the *Canons of Councils*, and the Sense of the
Primitive *Church* must have a weight. The
very Time is a good argument of it self.
Then the *Apostolical Traditions* were fresh,
and undisputed; and the *Church* much bet-
ter agreed than she has been since. Then,
Discipline was in Force, and Virtue Flou-
rish’d; and People liv’d up to their *Profes-
sion*. And as for the *Persons*, they are be-
yond all exception. Their *Station*, their
Learning,

Learning, and Sufficiency was very Considerable ; Their Piety and Resolution, extraordinary. They acted generously, and wrote freely, and were always above the little Regards of Interest or Danger. To be short ; They were, as we may say the *Worthies* of *Christendom*, the Flower of Humane Nature, and the Top of their *Species*. Nothing can be better establish'd than the Credit of these *Fathers* : Their Affirmation goes a great way in a proof ; And we might argue upon the strength of their *Character*.

But supposing them contented to wave their Privilege, and dispute upon the Level. Granting this, the *Stage* would be undone by them. The Force of their Reasoning, and the bare *Intrinsic* of the Argument, would be abundantly sufficient to carry the Cause.

But it may be objected, is the Resemblance exact between Old *Rome* and *London*, will the Parallel hold out, and has the *English Stage* any Thing so bad as the *Dancing* of the *Pantomimi* ? I don't say that : The *Modern Gestures* tho' bold, and Lewd too sometimes, are not altogether so scandalous as the *Roman*. Here then we can make them some little Abatement.

And to go as far in their *Excuse* as we can, 'tis probable their *Musick* may not be altogether so exceptionable as that of the

Antients. I don't say this part of the Entertainment is directly vicious, because I am not willing to Censure at Uncertainties. Those who frequent the *Play-House* are the most competent Judges: But this I must say, the Performances of this kind are much too fine for the *Place*. 'Twere to be wish'd that either the *Plays* were better, or the *Musick* worse. I'm sorry to see *Art* so meanly Prostituted: Atheism ought to have nothing Charming in its *Retinue*. 'Tis great Pity *Debauchery* should have the Assistance of a fine Hand, to whet the Appetite, and play it down.

Now granting the *Play-House-Musick* not vicious in the Composition, yet the design of it is to refresh the *Idea's* of the *Action*, to keep *Time* with the *Poem*, and be true to the *Subject*. For this Reason among others the *Tunes* are generally Airy and Gaillardizing: They are contriv'd on purpose to excite a sportive Humour, and spread a Gaiety upon the Spirits. To banish all Gravity and Scruple, and lay Thinking and Reflection asleep. This sort of Musick warms the Passions, and unlocks the Fancy, and makes it open to Pleasure like a Flower to the Sun. It helps a Luscious Sentence to slide, drowns the Discords of *Atheism*, and keeps off the Aversions of Conscience. It throws a Man off his Guard, makes way for an ill Impression,

sion, and is most Commodiously planted to do Mischief. A Lewd Play with good Musick is like a Loadstone Arm'd, it draws much stronger than before.

Now why should it be in the power of a few mercenary Hands to Play People out of their Senses, to run away with their Understandings, and wind their Passions about their Fingers as they list? Musick is almost as dangerous as Gunpowder; And it may be requires looking after no less than the *Press*, or the *Mint*. 'Tis possible a Publick Regulation might not be amiss. No less a Philosopher than *Plato* seems to be of this Opinion. He is clearly for keeping up the old, grave, and solemn way of *Playing*. He lays a mighty stress upon this Observation: He does not stick to affirm, that to extend the *Science*, and alter the *Notes*, is the way to have the *Laws* repeal'd and to unsettle the *Constitution*. I suppose He imagined that if the Power of *Sounds*, the Temper of *Constitutions*, and the Diversities of *Age*, were well studied; If this were done, and some general Permissions formed upon the Enquiry, the *Commonwealth* might find their Account in't.

Tully does not carry the Speculation thus high: However, he owns it has a weight in't, and should not be overlook'd, He denies not but that when the Musick is soft,

De Repub. L. 4.

Cic. de Leg. L. 2.

exquisite, and airy, 'tis dangerous and en-
 snaring. He commends the Discipline of
 the antient *Greeks*, for fencing against this
 Inconvenience. He tells us the *Lacedemo-
 nians* fixt the number of Strings for the
 Harp, by express *Law*. And afterwards si-
 lenc'd *Timotheus*, * and seiz'd his Harp, for
 having One String above publick Allow-
 ance. To return. If the *English-Stage* is more
 reserv'd than the *Roman* in the Case above
 mention'd: If they have any advantage in
 their *Instrumental* Musick, they lose it in
 their *Vocal*. Their *Songs* are often ram-
 pantly Lewd, and Irreligious to a flaming
 Excess. Here you have the very *Spirit* and
Essence of Vice drawn off strong scented,
 and throw'n into a little Compass. Now
 the *Antients*, as we have seen already, were
 inoffensive in this respect.

* a Famous
 Musitian.

Ibid.

See Chap.
 1st.

To go on. As to Rankness of Lan-
 guage we have seen how deeply the *Mo-
 derns* stand charged upon the Comparison.
 And as for their Caressing of Libertines,
 their ridiculing of Vertue, their horrible
 Profaneness, and Blasphemies, there's no-
 thing in *Antiquity* can reach them.

Now were the *Stage* in a Condition
 to wipe off any of these Imputations, which
 They are not, there are two Things be-
 hind, which would stick upon them, and
 have an ill Effect upon the *Audience*.

The

The first is their dilating so much upon the Argument of Love.

This Subject is generally treated Home, and in the most tender and passionate manner imaginable. 'Tis often the governing Concern: The Incidents make way, and the *Plot* turns upon't. As matters go, the Company expect it: And it may be the *Poets* can neither Write, nor Live without it. This is a cunning way enough of stealing upon the Blind Side, and Practising upon the Weakness of humane Nature. People love to see their *Passions* painted no less than their *Persons*: And like *Narcissus* are apt to dote on their own Image. This Bent of self-Admiration recommends the Business of *Amours*, and engages the Inclination. And which is more, these Love-representations oftentimes call up the Spirits, and set them on work. The *Play* is acted over again in the *Scene* of Fancy, and the first Imitation becomes a Model. *Love* has generally a *Party Within*; And when the Wax is prepared, the Impression is easily made. Thus the Disease of the *Stage* grows Catching: It throws its own *Amours* among the Company, and forms these *Passions* when it does not find them. And when they are born before, they thrive extreamly in this *Nursery*. Here they seldom fail either of Growth, or Complexion. They grow strong, and they

they grow Charming too. This is the best Place to recover a Languishing Amour, to rowse it from sleep, and retrieve it from Indifference. And thus Desire becomes Absolute, and forces the Oppositions of Decency and Shame. And if the Misfortune does not go thus far, the consequences are none of the best. The Passions are up in Arms, and there's a mighty Contest between Duty, and Inclination. The Mind is over-run with Amusements, and commonly good for nothing some time after.

I don't say the *Stage* Fells all before them, and disables the whole *Audience*: 'Tis a hard Battle where none escapes. However, Their *Triumphs* and their *Trophies* are unspeakable. Neither need we much wonder at the Matter. They are dangerously Prepar'd for Conquest, and Empire. There's Nature, and Passion, and Life, in all the Circumstances of their *Action*. Their *Declamation*, their *Mien*, their *Gestures*, and their *Equipage*, are very moving and significant. Now when the Subject is agreeable, a lively Representation, and a Passionate way of Expression, make wild work, and have a strange force upon the Blood, and Temper.

And then as for the General Strains of Courtship, there can be nothing more Profane and extravagant. The Heroe's Mistress

is

is no less than his Deity. She disposes of his Reason, prescribes his Motions, and Commands his Interest. What Sovereign Respect, what Religious Address, what Idolizing Raptures are we pester'd with? *Shrines* and *Offerings*, and Adorations, are nothing upon such solemn Occasions. Thus Love and Devotion, Ceremony and Worship, are Confounded; And God, and his Creatures treated both alike! These Shreds of Distraction are often brought from the *Play-House* into Conversation: And thus the *Sparks* are taught to Court their Mistresses, in the same Language they say their *Prayers*.

A Second Thing which I have to object against the *Stage* is their encouraging Revenge. What is more Common than Duels and Quarrelling in their *Characters* of Figure? Those Practices which are infamous in Reason, *Capital* in *Law*, and Damnable in Religion, are the Credit of the *Stage*. Thus Rage and Resentment, Blood and Barbarity, are almost Deified: Pride goes for Greatness, and *Fiends* and *Heroes* are made of the same Metal. To give Instances were needless, nothing is more frequent. And in this respect the *French Dramatists* have been to blame no less than the *English*. And thus the Notion of Honour is mis-stated, the Maxims of Christianity despised, and the Peace of the World disturb'd. I grant this desperate

*Vid. Cornilla Cid.
Cinna &
Pompeo.*

Moral
Essay.

desperate Custom is no *Original* of the *Stage*. But then why was not the Growth of it check'd? I thought the *Poets* business had not been to back false Reasoning and ill Practice; and to fix us in Frensy and Mistake. Yes, They have done their endeavour to cherish the Malignity, and keep the Disorder in Countenance. They have made it both the Mark, and the Merit of a Man of Honour; and set it off with *Quality*, and Commendation. But I have discours'd on this Subject elsewhere, and therefore shall pursue it no further.

To draw towards an End. And here I must observe that these two later Exceptions are but Petty Mismanagements with respect to the Former. And when the best are thus bad, what are the worst? What must we say of the more foul Representations, of all the Impudence in Language and Gesture? Can this stuff be the Inclination of *Ladies*? Is a *Reading* upon Vice so Entertaining, and do they love to see the *Stews* *Dissected* before them? One would think the Dishonour of their own Sex, the Discovery of so much Lewdness, and the treating Human Nature so very Coarsly, could have Little Satisfaction in't. Let us set Conscience aside, and throw the other World out of the Question: These Interests are far the greatest, but not all.

Ladies

Ladies have other Motives to confine them. The Restraints of Decency, and the Considerations of Honour, are sufficient to keep them at Home. But hoping They will be just to themselves I shall wave this unacceptable Argument. I shall only add, that a Surprize ought not to be Censured. Accidents are no Faults. The strictest Virtue may sometimes stumble upon an *Ill-Sight*. But Choice, and Frequency, and ill Ground, conclude strongly for Inclination. To be assured of the inoffensiveness of the *Play* is no more than a Necessary Precaution. Indeed the *Players* should be generally discouraged. They have no relish of Modesty, nor any Scruples upon the Quality of the Treat. The grossest *Disb* when 'twill down is as ready as the Best. To say Money is their Business and they must *Live*, is the Plea of *Pick-pockets*, and *High-way-Men*. These later may as well pretend their *Vocation* for a Lewd practice as the other. But To give the Charge it's due Compass: To comprehend the whole *Audience*, and take in the Motives of Religion.

And here I can't imagine how we can reconcile such Liberties without our Profession. These Entertainments are as it were Literally renounc'd in *Baptism*. They are the *Vanities of the wicked World*, and the *Works of the Devil*, in the most open, and
em-

or. 6. 14. emphatical Signification! *What Communion has Light with Darkness, and what concord has Christ with Belial.* Call you this Diversion? Can Profaneness be such an irresistible Delight? Does the Crime of the Performance make the Spirit of the Satisfaction, and is the Scorn of Christianity the Entertainment of Christians? Is it such a Pleasure to hear the *Scriptures* burlesqu'd? Is Ribaldry so very obliging, and *Atheism* so Charming a Quality? Are we indeed willing to quit the Priviledge of our Nature; to surrender our *Charater* of Immortality; and throw up the Pretences to another Life? It may be so! but then we should do well to remember that *Nothing* is not in our Power. Our Desires did not make us, neither can they unmake us. But I hope our Wishes are not so mean, and that we have a better Sense of the Dignity of our *Being*. And if so, how can we be pleas'd with those Things which would degrade us into Brutes, which ridicule our *Creed*, and turn all our Expectations into *Romance*?

And after all, the Jest on't is, these Men would make us believe their Design is Virtue and Reformation. In good time! They are likely to combat Vice with success, who destroy the Principles of Good and Evil! Take them at the best, and they do no more than expose a little Humour, and Formality.

But

THE CONCLUSION.

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But then, as the Matter is manag'd, the Correction is much worse than the Fault. They laugh at *Pedantry*, and teach *Altho*, cure a Pimple, and give the Plague. I heartily wish they would have let us alone. To exchange Virtue for Behaviour is a hard Bargain. Is not plain Honesty much better than Hypocrisy well Dress'd? What's Sight good for without Substance? What is a well-Bred Libertine but a well-Bred Knave? One that can't prefer Conscience to Pleasure, without calling himself Fool: And will sell his Friend, or his Father, if need be, for his Convenience.

In short: Nothing can be more disserviceable to Probity and Religion, than the management of the *Stage*. It cherishes those Passions, and rewards those Vices, which 'tis the Business of Reason to discountenance. It strikes at the Root of Principle, draws off the Inclinations from Virtue, and spoils good Education: 'Tis the most effectual means to baffle the Force of Discipline, to emasculate peoples Spirits and Debauch their Manners. How many of the Unwary have these *Sirens* devour'd? And how often has the best Blood been tainted, with this Infection? What Disappointment of Parents, what Confusion in Families, and what Beggary in Estates have been hence occasion'd? And which is still worse, the

the Mischief spreads daily, and the Malignity grows more envenom'd. The Fever works up towards Madness, and will scarcely endure to be touch'd. And what hope is there of Health when the Patient strikes in with the Disease, and flies in the Face of the Remedy? Can Religion retrieve us? Yes, when we don't despise it. But while our *Notions* are naught, our *Lives* will hardly be otherwise. What can the Assistance of the Church signify to those who are more ready to Rally the *Preacher*, than Practise the *Sermon*? To those who are overgrown with Pleasure, and hardened in Ill Custom? Who have neither Patience to hear, nor Conscience to take hold of? You may almost as well feed a Man without a Mouth, as give Advice where there's no disposition to receive it. 'Tis true; as long as there is Life there's Hope. Sometimes the Force of Argument, and the Grace of God, and the Anguish of Affliction, may strike through the Prejudice, and make their Way into the Soul. But these Circumstances don't always meet, and then the Case is extremely dangerous. For this miserable Temper, we may thank the *Stage* in a great Measure: And therefore, if I mistake not, They have the least pretence to Favour, and the most need of Repentance, of all Men Living.

T H E E N D.

